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NEW STATESMAN

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Justifying the Deliverance

That the Government should have survived this week's Opposition vote of no confidence must be as much a relief to the electorate as it clearly was to Mr Callaghan and his ministers. The factor that Mrs Thatcher failed to take into account – though both *The Times* and the *Guardian* pointedly brought it to her attention last week – was the understandable reluctance of the electorate to be herded to the polls for the third time in barely three years. A more sensitive political leader than Mrs Thatcher would, no doubt, have sensed that feeling from the beginning and resisted getting so excited. There is no point in playing Lady Macbeth unless you can do it effectively; and even Mrs Thatcher must now concede that she has diminished her reputation by attempting the role, only to fail in it.

There are, however, lessons for Mr Callaghan, too. Certainly it would have looked more gracious if he had offered a working arrangement to the Liberals before being driven to it – but that is hardly the central issue. There is, to be blunt about it, no point in maintaining a Labour government if it is effectively paralysed. Office, after all, has never been the motive force of Labour politics; the power to bring about change is what matters for socialists. And, whatever he may have done for his own ego, the Prime Minister has certainly done no service to the Labour Party's supporters by blandly maintaining that, come what may, his Government will last for another two and a half years.

It is now, of course, clear that it won't – and the future course of action that the Government follows should be taken in full consciousness of that fact. What was wrong with the charade of the past week was that it meant precious little to the uncommitted public and still less to socialists; all the outside world saw was a typical piece of parliamentary pantomime – where, almost certainly, if the motion had been one of 'confidence' it would have been lost, whereas since (thanks to Mrs Thatcher's impetuosity) it happened to be one of 'no confidence', it was just beaten off. And the back history was even worse. Manoeuvres, like that last week in which Labour MPs were instructed not even to vote for their own Government's motion, do nothing for the public's confidence in Parliament or, indeed, for its respect for the Labour Party.

Even after his narrow escape this week all Mr Callaghan has bought is time, and that can be an expensive commodity unless it is profitably used. Inevitably there are harsh limits, dictated by parliamentary arithmetic, on the Government's freedom of legislative action; but that in itself is no adequate reason why Mr Callaghan and his colleagues should not resolve to go down fighting rather than tamely resigning themselves to being permanently in hock to Mr Steel's little band of Liberals.

What finally destroyed the Attlee government of 1951 was not simply a general feeling that it had run out of ideas; it was also a justifiable conviction on the part of the public that it had lost the will even to attempt to rule. The situation is not wholly dissimilar today. What the Government above all now needs to demonstrate is its commitment to the belief that there are still important and radical changes that demand to be introduced in Britain – and a readiness, if necessary, to stake its future on leading the struggle to bring them about.

One such issue is fortunately already to hand. The Prime Minister and his colleagues have pussy-footed with the Bullock Report on industrial democracy now for over two months: far from there being a Bill there has not even been a White (or even a Green) paper. Yet the challenge to the oligarchic power of capital in British society is surely a 'natural' for a Labour government. In its days out of power Labour used to be encouraged – by Dick Crossman among others – to be 'a fighting Opposition'. The corollary of that argument was never that, while in office, it should act as if it were a conformist guardian of the status quo. But that, alas, was the impression Mr Callaghan contrived to give even before his deal with Mr Steel this week – and now inevitably it is reinforced. To be prepared to 'pay any price, bear any burden, make any sacrifice' simply to stay in office is hardly an epitaph for a socialist.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Mrs Thatcher's Emergency

All the week the Commons has been in a state of excitement. And not only the Commons. The ministries on Monday were already working out their provisional election campaign plans, in case the vote went against them. Distinguished old boys – Lord Hailsham, Lord George-Brown, Lord Avebury – were seen wandering around the corridors of Westminster, no doubt enjoying the scent of blood. Questions were asked, passers-by were quizzed, the blind gossiped with the blind. On Monday we thought that Labour was done for, until late at night the tide turned. On Tuesday we passed a day of intense activity and speculation: everyone seemed by now to have arrived in London. The Ulstermen were in popular demand. The Liberals were mobbed. The Tories' expectations began to sag.

It was a good moment to observe the party leaders. Each was being tested on precisely those qualities for which each was chosen. The Liberals had chosen David Steel precisely because he was supposed to have a level head. But had he? Or had he not gone too far in his demands over the weekend? Labour MPs on Monday were speaking of Steel with contempt – he was just not up to it, inept, puerile. By asking for too much he would not only bring down the Labour Government, he would destroy his own party as well. The essence of David Steel's political philosophy (perhaps 'political philosophy' is too strong a term for it) was that the Liberals should get a slice of the action, break the two-party monopoly of power. This was Steel's first big chance, and – oh my God, no! he was going to bungle it. Or was he? Was there any way that Callaghan could save him from making a fool of himself?

If Steel had been chosen for level-headedness, Margaret Thatcher had been chosen for daring and determination. It was she who had dared to put the knife into Heath. Now she had to dare to do the same to Callaghan. Yet the evidence is that the decision was not taken lightly, and on Friday last week, immediately after she had declared her state of emergency, Thatcher was seen paying one of her rare visits to the tea-room, asking the Tories whether they thought she had done the right thing. She had a good weekend, publicity, a chance to terrify the wits out of all right-thinking coves, but there was little she could do to keep up the pressure. On Tuesday she should have had a little dress rehearsal against Callaghan. Instead, she was well and truly trounced. After Question-time, she was said to have been seen tearing strips off William Whitelaw for not informing her about the row over the Tory candidate at Stechford; Callaghan had invited her to explain how the discrepancies had arisen between official Tory immigration policy and the document being used in the by-election; she had not had any answer ready.

And Callaghan? Why was he chosen as leader? It was surely for precisely those gifts which have had to be deployed in the last week – an ability to wheel and deal, to fix it. Or, if *it* proved unfixable, to win an election. Either way he was going to be tested more severely than ever before as leader. It was his decision to keep Labour from voting on last week's adjournment motion. *He* had done the war-gaming, deciding to force Thatcher to put a no-confidence motion rather than have to put a confidence motion himself. Whatever the reason for the original lack of votes (and, by the way, it was nothing to do with any left-wing revolt, as some papers have mistakenly said; the only Labour members who were not going to support the Government were Reg Prentice and Jeremy Bray), it was Callaghan's tactics which put the party in hazard, and determined the way the battle went.

The Tuesday Question-time was the first turning-point in the fortunes of Labour, and a triumph of the Callaghan style. It cheered everyone up no end. There were some extraordinary spectacles. Doug Hoyle, for instance, who has spent years complaining about the way the North-west was treated, had suddenly discovered that the textile industry there was benefiting enormously from the temporary employment subsidy. Alec Woodall led the cheering with cries of 'Good old Jim', for all the world as if he feared the prospect of a general election; one might have thought that with a majority of over 30,000 he wouldn't have been too concerned. But everybody on the Labour side was concerned to keep up the Prime Minister's spirits, and the Prime Minister returned the compliment by giving every indication that matters were in capable hands.

Afterwards, it was the turn of Tory MPs to despise the Liberals. What sort of deal, after all, did they expect to get out of Callaghan? No more nationalisation (snigger, snigger)? What sort of nationalisation was there in the pipeline anyway? No more full-blooded socialism? Who, in their right minds, thought that the Callaghan regime had anything to do with socialism? Leave the water companies alone? Only a Liberal would have thought of mentioning them under such circumstances. However much they go on in public about the Red Threat, most sensible Tories adopt a more relaxed and cynical tone in private. They know perfectly well that the Government is at the end of its legislative tether. Concessions of the kind that Steel was demanding would amount to little more than a recognition of previous realities.

And yet there was still great zest in the Tory manner. Michael Brotherton, the Louth loud-mouth, told me that he had brought his horrifying palatinate purple shirt up from the country, especially for the debate. Sure enough, when the debate opened on Wednesday, there was Brotherton's neck, a glowing symphony of purples and deep reds, swelling, contracting, swelling even more.

Thatcher's speech was heard by a packed house – at least some of it was heard. The rest was drowned in laughter, jeers and contempt. It was a wretched effort, quite without content, laced with unintentional ambiguities. I watched the Home Secretary smothering his giggles as Thatcher cried out about Callaghan: 'I know he *likes* it!' At the end of the speech there were prolonged ironical shouts of 'more, more, more!'

Callaghan, by contrast, was able to survive the odd mistake of delivery. He secured an audience by the simple expedient of having something to say, although when it came his news created more decibels of laughter than anything Thatcher devised. It was brilliantly prefaced by what sounded very like the threat of nuclear war. In order to avert nuclear war, it appeared, a deal had to be made; when the deal was announced, it proved a show-stopper. But how much had Steel in fact achieved? At the time it sounded not too bad, yet one Labour member to whom I spoke in advance was afraid that the derision of the house when the terms were announced would make the Liberals change their minds and go scuttling off to vote with the Tories. In sum, however, the deal reflected no more than the strengths and the weaknesses of both negotiators. Steel did not get all that much, but nor did he give all that much. The contract is not binding, and is anyway, renewable at the end of this session. It should be borne in mind that what might seem a small concession to a Conservative might be of great value to a party in desperate need of a *raison d'être*. Steel's own position, as outlined at Llandudno last year, has been vindicated if not triumphantly, at least fairly convincingly. He has got *some* of his teeth into the real meat of power.

It is the custom of Labour leaders to be nice to their Liberal equivalents. Labour wants a healthy Liberal Party. Mr Callaghan has broken no precedent. He emerges from the week's negotiations with a better chance of ultimate survival. He has greatly pleased his supporters and given some pleasant surprises to his left-wing critics. He has survived. The party has survived. He has given Thatcher a bloody nose. As a Labour member put it to me on Wednesday afternoon: 'That's not at all bad, for a 65-year-old has-been.'

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K. R. Sundar Rajan

Mrs Gandhi's Defeat

On Tuesday morning my own paper, the *Statesman*, front-paged a huge photograph showing a municipal sweeper stuffing torn election posters into his sack. On top was a poster showing a smiling, beautiful Mrs Gandhi exhorting people to vote for Congress. Urchins roamed about the old city splashing ink and mud on her pictures, despite Jagjivan Ram's plea that no disrespect be shown to her.

That same morning as the People's Party raced towards a comfortable majority in Parliament I took a cycle-rickshaw and asked to be driven past 1 Safdarjang Road, the Prime Minister's official residence. A sentry at the gate grinned as I stepped out to gaze at the modest bungalow from which her coterie had tyrannised a nation of 600 million for 20 months. Half-a-dozen policemen were scanning newspaper headlines while a transistor radio was blaring out details of the Congress Party's ignominious fall. I remembered a morning 14 months ago when a terror-stricken taxi-driver bluntly refused to drive past 1 Safdarjang Road.

To an Indian who lived through the ordeal of 20 months of Emergency the change in Delhi seems unreal. 'It is just too good to be true,' as one jubilant official in the Government's press information bureau said. Mrs Gandhi's supporters are taking refuge in the argument that the manner in which she accepted the triple disaster – that of her party, her son and herself – proves she has always been a good democrat at heart. But the fact is that when she announced elections on 18 January she looked forward to a smashing victory. I was told by an authoritative source that her son Sanjay Gandhi, Defence Minister Bansilal and other cronies strongly opposed the holding of an early election. There were long and heated arguments in the Junta and at one stage it looked as if Mrs Gandhi would be overruled by Sanjay and others.

But an uneasy compromise was reached on the basis that the Emergency would not be lifted even after the expected Congress victory, that press censorship would be clamped down again and that those who opposed the regime would be sent back to prison if – as Bansilal put it – 'these rogues do not behave like convicts on parole'. In fact as the election campaign gathered momentum Sanjay is authoritatively believed to have asked Ramnath Kau, head of Mrs Gandhi's dreaded intelligence organisation, to prepare a list of journalists, teachers and other politically articulate people who had worked against the government during the emergency.

It's no doubt difficult to resist the tempting conclusion that the election has been a referendum on Mrs Gandhi unbridled autocracy. The People's Party victory is now widely regarded as a refutation of the theory that the average Indian is not interested in such niceties as personal freedom, judicial independence and press rights. If this is, in fact, true then there is real hope for Indian democracy. Much is going to depend on the Peoples Party's actual performance in office. Its own future and that of the present parliamentary system of government will be bright if at least some of the things promised by Congress for 30 years to the masses now get done.

These include efficient administration at all levels, removal of corruption, adoption of policies biased in favour of the have-nots and the practice of austerity. Ironically, what the new Administration needs to do has already been spelt out in Mrs Gandhi's 20-point economic programme. Unfortunately, however, she thought of the public weal only when the Allahabad High Court threw her out of office for corrupt electoral practices. As Jayaprakash Narayan said to me: 'I tremble to think of what will happen

'Now, Madam – will you kindly get off the line!'

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if we, too, let the people down. Mrs Gandhi's fate is a lesson to all other parties.'

The challenge before the People's Party is to show that a party which has restored freedom to people is also capable of making that freedom meaningful in economic terms. As one Delhi university teacher put it: 'I hope the People's Party is not going to borrow Mrs Gandhi's socialist jargon. Let's have some real evidence that the People's Party will actually work for the poor. India has paid too heavy a price for Mrs Gandhi's big business-backed brand of democratic socialism.'

The People's Party is not likely to crack up as many Congress politicians still hope. On the contrary, it may act as a magnet to these very men. Already there are rumours that several Congress legislators are planning to apply for People's Party membership. While this may augment People's Party membership and strength still further, thoughtful Indians desperately hope that the party will avoid any such exercise. The election has laid the foundation of a credible two-party system, but this will crumble if the new men in authority in Delhi emulate Mrs Gandhi's politics of seduction and blackmail.

Contrary to reports, Mrs Gandhi has not taken her defeat calmly and philosophically, despite what visitors claim to have seen. The People's Party has done well to decide to be magnanimous towards her. But most Indians would like to see her son punished. The predominant feeling is that along with Bansilal and others in the coterie, Sanjay should be brought to book for his assaults not only on democracy but on the elementary decencies of life. They are said to be involved in at least 46 shady financial deals, quite apart from all the scandals involved in forced sterilisation. Fortunately the elections have shown that mass of Indians no longer worship at the shrine of fatalism. Better still, they choose to seek remedies for their degradation not through blood-letting but by an effective and sensible use of their franchise. That is what suddenly made me proud as my rickshaw pedalled me past 1 Safdarjang Road.

New Delhi.

Phillip Whitehead

Inside the Annan Committee

It was all a bit like a modern *Canterbury Tales*. Genially marshalled by Noël Annan we journeyed along the highroads of broadcasting for nearly three years. No one dropped out, or died. The company survived unchanged, though not all travelled every yard of the way, and some of us may have occasionally thought that a colleague 'seemed bisier than he was'. The difference was that as we travelled along the tales were told *to* us, and pretty tall stories some of them were. The other difference may be that we shall arrive to find the shrine desecrated, or reconsecrated to the memory of the knights, for the leak of an earlier draft of our report to the press has led to its condemnation, sight unseen, by the callow and the shallow elements in the Tory Party.

Lord Annan was first asked to undertake this task, with much rhetorical optimism about the pace of technical change, by the then Minister of Posts, John Stonehouse, in 1970. That request itself came as a response to a mounting campaign for a thorough examination of the future of broadcasting by *ad hoc* pressure groups like the Free Communications and 76 Groups. The Tories came in, peremptorily cancelled the committee, and set up commercial radio for profit, as powerful interests in their party had demanded. So Annan had to set out afresh in 1974.

Originally sixteen characters met in search of a plan. At first sight agreement would have seemed impossible. We were too many. Unlike our predecessors, the Pilkington Committee, we were never likely to be dominated by one or two strong-minded and articulate individuals. We seemed to have two of everything. In Noël Annan himself, Marghanita Laski, Dipak Nandy and Tony Jay we had gifted writers of English prose. Some of us knew we were suspect. As a signatory of the Labour Party discussion paper *The People and the Media* I knew I was. That document's apparent 'emphasis on controls rather than programmes' – the phrase is Grace Wyndham Goldie's – made some people believe, as she apparently does, that it was intent on restructuring broadcasting in the interests and the image of some new social order. Others of us, it was murmured, were in the pocket of ITV, spent too much time being briefed by the BBC at Ditchley, or whatever. There were stories that Anthony Smith, who had been everyone's favourite to be on the committee, had been taken off at the personal intervention of Harold Wilson.

So we all had to learn about each other, as well as about broadcasting. It was the singular triumph of Noël Annan that he made both processes not only possible, but also agreeable. He had the powerful backing of Geoffrey Sims, vice-chancellor of Sheffield University, another cool head when conflict boiled. We learned who had the readiest knack of instant redrafting, who was most likely to put a BBC view, who always arrived 50 minutes late. We watched for who got the seat of disfavour at the chairman's right hand, out of his line of vision and hearing. We came to see each other's merits, to learn that the greatest clerks were not always the wisest men – or women. More slowly we learned about broadcasting, and to sift the evidence to find nuggets of truth among all the humbug and special pleading. We set off on a picaresque mission round the British Isles; if you were pulling up the roots you had to take a look at them. We would get on a train to visit some sturdy northern company, unaware that most of its rugged northern executives were riding up from Hampstead a couple of carriages ahead of us. It took a lot of time.

This is the weakness of *ad hoc* committees of inquiry. They take an unconscionable time if they are to be properly informed. They may then emerge with the tablets of stone into an entirely changed political landscape. We all felt the lack of dispassionate research, caught between those with a vested interest in the present broadcasting duopoly and those who had political rather than broadcasting reasons for starting again at the beginning. On all its structural recommendations the committee ultimately failed to achieve unaminity, except for the proposal that the fourth channel should go not to ITV but to an Open Broadcasting Authority. As all socialists know it is always easier to get agreement about growth than redistribution. But we did get to overwhelming majorities on everything except the radio/television division of the BBC, lost by ten to six. The alliances fluctuated. That is why there is no minority report. Different people split off from their colleagues at different times. It was not on prior political opinions. At the very end I found a difference arising with my closest ally on the committee, Dipak Nandy. I never did persuade my good friends and Labour colleagues Tom Jackson and Hilda Lawrence to accept the case for dividing the BBC. Equally some of the names that had made me quail when I saw the full list of the committee turned out to be trumps, notably a great crag of Highland granite called Jim Mackay – a former Home Office civil servant who turned out to have as radical a cast of mind as any.

We were all agreed after our first year about a central strategy. The duopoly must end, but not with the total destruction of everything which has so far developed in British broadcasting. The theme is pluralism. More outlets, differently controlled and differently financed. More room for experiment in ways of seeing and saying. A place for free-range products in the battery culture of computerised mass audience programming. At Churchill College Cambridge, in December 1975, the secretariat drew up a whole range of options from the mono-

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lith of a newly centralised structure under some overall broadcasting commission to the mouse of the status quo. None of them satisfied. What did receive some support was a plan for the evolution of our broadcasting system, using or adapting some of its present features, over the next 15 years. The idea was to have a national two-channel television authority (the present BBC TV) a regional one-channel authority (ITV) supplemented by an open television authority, more akin to a publisher, and borrowing heavily from Anthony Smith's proposal for a Television Foundation. Later there would be local television and cable too. Radio would be divided between a national system (the present BBC) and a local one, the first charge of a new local radio authority. In orbit around all this would be a non-executive body charged with holding public hearings on the performance of the authorities, with technical research and reassessment, and with the hearing of complaints.

Much of this survives in the report. The argument was most intense about the orbital body. Would it not become too powerful, another swollen bureaucracy making work for itself? Would it begin to interfere in day-to-day broadcasting? The problem was solved by proposing separate bodies for technical advice, complaints, and what came to be called a Public Inquiry Board for Broadcasting, small, externally triggered into action, specific in remit. I think Noël Annan's own instincts were for caution, but he worked hard for a compromise, with the chipper Tory lady from Wiltshire, Sara Morrison, as his galloper.

The question of the BBC was impossible to resolve. The hand of the Corporation lies heavy on broadcasting, its imprint unmistakeable, its theology unshakeable. The central point of its theology – the licence fee as a guarantee of independence – was conceded early on. But what could be done about the corporate bureaucracy whose weight is suffocating the institution – and internal attempts to prune it, if the suppression of the Francis Report is any fair guide? Ultimately a majority of the committee felt that harsh words were enough. Some admitted that it was the *political* consequence of what they admitted was a broadcasting advantage that frightened them off from splitting the BBC into its constituent radio and television parts. Six of us disagreed, the two Scots, Mackay and John Pollock, the two academics, Dipak Nandy and Hilde Himmelweit, and the two producers, Tony Jay and myself.

A large majority of the committee was, however, in favour of a fresh start in local radio. We saw no reason why the public service stations, for all their achievements, should remain within Auntie's all-embracing arms. Nor did we think that the jingle warfare of the commercial stations, lively though they were, argued that the IBA could or would make them a first concern. But someone should. So the IBA is to go back to running a regional Television Authority, whilst a new body takes a fresh grip of local radio, introducing non-profit-making trusts and genuine local ownership, redistributing the revenue that the system can undoubtedy earn towards the less lucrative but equally deserving areas.

The whole committee was able to agree on the other major innovation – the Open Broadcasting Authority – to introduce new aspects of pluralism into our creative output, finding its finance in a different fashion. This unanimous recommendation has been the first to be condemned by those greedy for ITV-2, determined to shackle us to the duopoly for ever more.

Now, for the committee, the days of wine and roses are done. No more Guildhall banquets. No more deferential invitations. No more chances to meet Morecambe and Wise, or Doctor Who, when you thought you were going along for a little chat about the future of the BBC. The 1,300 submissions are in – too many to be printed. Like some fungoid growth they have overwhelmed my study and flowed down two flights of stairs, waiting for the Home Office shredder. Richard Hoggart was driven to despair by the superficiality of the reception for Pilkington. We may fare no better. Everyone will have discovered by the weekend great truths that evaded us for three years. So be it. What will be unforgivable, launching our report as we do in the shadow of a government crisis, would be the abandoning of public and parliamentary debate. An incoming Tory government that simply got the gravy train rolling once more would destroy any belief that as a nation we are serious about improving our broadcasting.

David Leitch

The Reds Come in from the Cold

The flat, almost detached tones employed by French government spokesmen whose thankless duty it was to comment on the Left's gains in the municipal elections indicated more clearly than the statistics themselves how severe the set-back has been for President Giscard's ruling coalition. It is, as a matter of fact, possible to find some crumbs of comfort for the *giscardiens* if you spend long enough picking around in the debris. But on Sunday night, as the commentators repeated the ever growing list of townships won by the Left, the politicians of the majority were too shell-shocked even to try.

The names were like a litany of disaster, some of them – Angoulême, Poitiers, Alençon, Saint-Chamond, Rennes – sounding at least as bizarre in a French context as electoral announcements here that Labour had triumphed in Canterbury or Cheltenham. Rennes, for example, despite periodic excitations to do with Breton nationalism, has been a kind of heartland of Christian Democracy under one name or another for as long as anyone can remember. A few weeks ago you could probably have got ten to one against a socialist becoming mayor. Saint-Chamond, famous in France as the virtually hereditary *fief* of Antoine Pinay, was another body blow. Anyone familiar with French voting habits would have assumed that here if anywhere in France you could have put up a performing elephant against a socialist of any hue and awaited the results with equanimity.

Thus it is not surprising that Raymond Barre, whose candour is perhaps not his greatest electoral asset, should have allowed what sounded like profoundly defeatist remarks to be repeated over the radio every 20 minutes or so. As for President Giscard, who saw four ministers defeated in unlikely places very largely because they were thought to have more than average loyalty to him personally, silence was no doubt the wisest course. It is hard to imagine what kind of a brave response he could have produced when confronted with, for example, the news that Le Mans, Evreux and Saint-Etienne had treated themselves to new mayors who were Communists.

It is also easy to comprehend the wave of panic selling when the Bourse opened on Monday morning. After all the Left had won victories in some 60 major cities. And, even more depressing for the majority (or ex-majority as it has now really become) there are now Communists sitting on councils in 80 communities where last Saturday they had no representation at all.

The ruling coalition, as the Prime Minister so frankly admitted, had only themselves to blame for the results or, to put it a bit more frankly, only Jacques Chirac to blame. If Chirac had lost Paris, paradoxically enough, the Government he purports to support might well have been in a healthier political position than is now the case. His personal 'adventurism', to employ the vocabulary favoured by such supporters as President Giscard still has, must be the most important single explanation for the advance of the Left in traditional right-wing pastures. Since Chirac won Paris, the *giscardiens* are now obliged to accept his own assessment of himself as the only leader with any chance of preventing the Left gaining a parliamentary majority in 12 months' time.

And once the dust had settled it was possible to discern that Chirac's prospects are by no means as negligible as they were looking late on Saturday night. In the first place the abstention rate (of 29 per cent) was certainly higher than can be expected when the electors come to vote for a new National Assembly. Among these there are likely to be some government supporters, or at any rate some who don't fancy the sound of Mitterrand and Marchais. Again, despite spectacular gains in unlikely places,

NEXT WEEK
Household Faces
A new series of NS profiles on prominent figures in the media
1 – Angela Rippon

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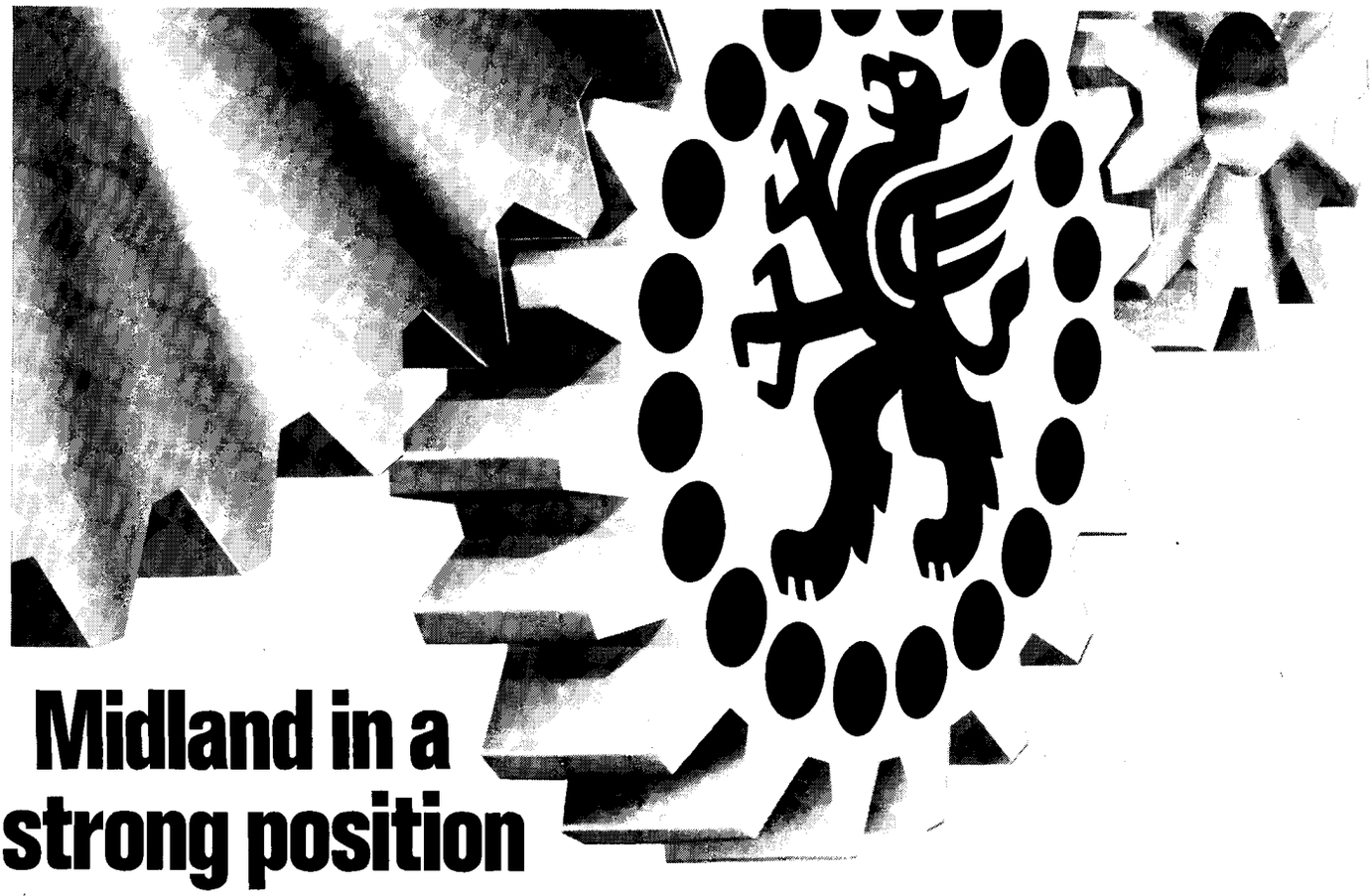

Midland in a strong position to aid industrial recovery

In 1976 the Group made a profit before tax of £166·4 million compared with £82·4 million for the previous year.

The Chairman, Lord Armstrong of Sanderstead, in his statement to shareholders refers to the increase of some £84 million as a welcome recovery in profits from the levels of the past two years and emphasises the contribution made during the year by subsidiary and associated companies. In addition, income from the clearing bank operations of the Group increased because of an expansion in the volume of lending and higher interest rates in the latter half of the year; profits have benefited substantially from the real and continued growth of the Group's international business.

In the course of his statement Lord Armstrong commented on the following issues -

Capital base– future development needs

The Midland recognises it has a part to play in this country's industrial recovery and the improvement in the capital position is essential to ensure that the Bank has a capital base appropriate to both its present volume of business and, of equal importance, the likely future levels. In current conditions the making of profits, and the retention of a reasonable proportion of those profits in the business, is fundamental to ensuring that our capital base is maintained at a level to provide not only the fixed assets we require, but also a fund of free capital to act as a cover for the lending activities carried out with depositors' funds.

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Nationalisation–'Great and unnecessary damage'

Proposals have been prepared within the Labour Party for nationalising the four largest clearing banks and the acid test of these proposals is to ask if they would ensure an improvement in the way the banks meet the needs of their customers, their staff and the country as a whole. The answer must be that they do not. In fact, I am convinced that nationalisation of the banks would do nothing but great and unnecessary damage to the national economy, to the banks as institutions, to their customers whether personal, industrial or commercial, and to their staff – not to mention their shareholders. In addition to all this, great harm would be done to London as one of the financial centres of the world, thus reducing the contribution to invisible earnings made not only by the banks, but by the City as a whole.

1976 Group Results in Brief

	£000's
Profit before taxation	166,397
Taxation	89,546
Attributable profit (after extraordinary items and minority interests)	71,710
Shareholders' dividends	16,726
Retained profit	54,984

Staff

The readiness of the staff to absorb and master changes during 1976, and the resulting contribution to the success of our business, is warmly acknowledged by the Board. Much thought is being given to practical ways in which staff can express their views in order that they may contribute to the full in the future of the business.

The Outlook– hope for industrial recovery

1977 opened on a hesitant note in the world economy. In the United Kingdom, the easing of the pressures which built up in the financial markets towards the end of 1976, should provide a basis on which recovery can now proceed. An important element in this will be the revival of investment in industry and here we look forward to playing our part to the full, trusting that the requirements of monetary restraint and the still substantial, though diminishing, deficit of the public sector will not inhibit our capacity to meet the financial needs of industry.

With these uncertainties it would not be sensible to prophesy that business will be easy in 1977, but in the meantime the Bank will be taking some important steps to organise itself in such a way that it will be equipped and ready to meet the developing needs of its United Kingdom customers in the years ahead.

If you would like a copy of Lord Armstrong's full Statement and the Report for 1976, please write to: The Secretary, Midland Bank Limited, Head Office, 27 Poultry, London EC2P 2BX.

Midland Bank Group

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last Sunday's total percentage vote for Left candidates (51.5) is not quite enough to ensure a parliamentary majority. In some urban constituencies they build up enormous 'redundant' majorities – the Communist candidate in Saint-Ouen, for example, found himself with 90 per cent of the votes. To *guarantee* a National Assembly majority the Left still need something like another 2.5 per cent overall.

Because of the extreme introversion which is inevitable in local elections a fascinating international aspect of the current evolution in French political life passed virtually unnoticed. It provides an indication of how the situation is viewed on the other side of the Atlantic. In the Kissinger era any US diplomat detected lurking in the monstrous shadow of the Communist Party HQ up there in Belleville might just as well have packed his bags for cross-posting to Swaziland, or somewhere even less prestigious.

No more, it appears. On the eve of the elections an unprecedented meeting took place in the Belleville fortress of glass and concrete. The host was Jean Kanapa, the PCF's Politburo foreign affairs expert, who represented Georges Marchais last year in Moscow at the Soviet 25th Party Congress. His (so far unnamed) guest was an American diplomat bearing a message from Cyrus Vance, no less.

No official transcript of this intriguing *tête-à-tête* has appeared – or is likely to – but it clearly marks a major foreign policy switch as far as the Americans are concerned. Nothing, even for Giscard himself, could have more clearly underlined the message that the Kissinger days are well and truly over. The adamantine and now evidently unrealistic line that US-French relations would be gravely prejudiced by the inclusion of Communist ministers in a Left government has thus, like Kissinger himself, become no more than a historic memory.

The very fact of the meeting suggests that all the efforts made by the PCF before and since their 22nd Party Congress last year – not just the window-dressing, like the abolition of the *Internationale*, but the consistently independent line on such matters as human rights in the Eastern bloc – have reaped benefits in Washington, as well as Saint-Chamond and Rennes. Alexandre Sanguinetti, for 20 years coldest of cold warriors and electoral exponent of the Red Menace spectre, seems to believe so at any rate. Of all the 'majority' commentators last Sunday his contribution was the most pathetic.

What went wrong? he was asked, and the answer, as candid and damaging as the Prime Minister's, came back swift as a reflex. 'The electors aren't frightened of the PCF anymore' said the old Gaullist, as if he couldn't believe what he was saying.

Paris

Mervyn Jones

The Leyland Voters

All is in flux as I write this article; among other things, the dispute between the management of British Leyland and the toolroom workers. Mr Roy Fraser, chairman of the toolroom workers' committee which conducted the recent strike and continues in existence, was in a resolute mood when I met him on 18 March. He made it clear that the return to work was caused not by the threat of dismissal ('we'd reckoned with that') but by the management's agreement to talk. Was he claiming victory, then? Mr Fraser, a thoughtful man, replied: 'We've prised the door open.' He went on: 'We'll see what they have to say. If we get no satisfaction we'll report that back to a full meeting and there may well be a desire to resume the strike.' The talk this Monday seems to have gone badly.

Behind the toolmakers' insistence on a voice of their own in wage negotiations, there lies a clear dissatisfaction with the leadership of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, which in their view has failed to protect the interests of skilled workers, and also to iron out the disparities between plants in the sprawling Leyland empire. The trouble lies, Mr Fraser told me, in the structure of the union – a pyramid of indirect democracy between branch, district, division and national committee. 'What we question is the integrity of some of the men entrenched at the top.' He disclaimed any idea of starting a breakaway union, but said: 'We have to take control of the union out of the hands of the bureaucrats.'

Mr Fraser, who works in the Cowley plant (formerly Morris Oxford), lives at Garsington, a village which must have changed a bit since Lady Ottoline Morrell's days. He has a pleasant modern house with attractive furniture and an array of indoor plants, and offered coffee in cups of stylish design. His way of life is of the sort that used to be called middle-class but to which – as the late Anthony Crosland, among others, used to insist – working-class people have as much right as anyone else. The maintenance of these standards has suddenly become difficult. I didn't ask Mr Fraser about his mortgage and hire-purchase commitments, but they are certainly worrying for many young to middle-aged skilled workers. Having rejected what they saw as an inadequate offer, the toolroom men have had no wage increase in the current year of the social contract. In 1975 a toolmaker had a basic of £57 a week and plenty of overtime; in 1977 he has a basic rate of £63 and overtime in Leyland plants is scanty. Meanwhile inflation . . . well, we all know. From his personal knowledge Mr Fraser cited two skilled men who have recently left the industry, one to become a taxi-driver and the other an insurance salesman.

There are thousands of Leyland workers in the Stechford division of Birmingham, where a by-election is scheduled to be held (I write before Wednesday night's vote in the Commons) on 31 March. One plant with 4,000 workers is inside the constituency, and two others with a total payroll of 17,000 are not far away. Stechford has huge council estates and some pockets of decaying housing; but, not having been in this part of the city before, I was surprised by the stretches of ample suburban homes. It didn't look like a place with a Labour majority of 11,000. The appearance of Stechford is, in fact, a legacy of the 'you never had it so good' era, which left a greater mark in the Midlands than anywhere else. In the election in which Harold Macmillan used that slogan, Roy Jenkins's majority was down to 2,923.

I went canvassing with Terry Davis, the Labour candidate. The first man who came to the door said that he'd been a foreman on a building site, but has now been unemployed for a year. 'The Labour government's really chopped the construction industry, hasn't it?' he said reproachfully. He was disappointed in Labour altogether and he didn't vote in the 1976 municipal election. (In that election the Tories won two of the three wards in the constituency and polled 9,800 votes to Labour's 8,700, which strikes me as a bad omen allowing for the notorious difficulty in getting out the Labour vote for local polls.) The ex-foreman did, however, say that he would be voting for Mr Davis, giving as his reason: 'That Thatcher woman sends me up the wall.'

A couple of doors along, we met a Leyland worker who had gone beyond disappointment with the Government to anger. 'The unions have kept their share of the bargain,' he said, 'but what's the Government done to hold prices down? You tell me. Go on, tell me.' Mr Davis replied that the Tories don't believe in price control at all, but the voter wasn't impressed. 'You haven't got much support down at the Labour Club, you know,' he told the candidate. 'They'll go for the National Front if they vote at all.' Mention of the Labour Club reminded him of a visit there by Mr Jenkins – 'he had a pint of beer in his hand while the camera was on him, and a whisky out of of camera shot'. He was adamant that he wouldn't be voting Labour. 'All the politicians are behaving like a bunch of kids. Everyone ought to protest by not voting, that's what I think.'

Mr Davis says – and I imagine he is right – that there is no sign of a direct switch of votes from Labour to Tory. The danger is of Labour abstentions and of protest votes, some of which may go to the National Front and some to the two Marxist candidates. 'There's only one thing in the voters' minds,' Mr Davis told me. 'It's prices, prices, prices wherever you go.' Is it prices, though, or is it wage restraint? Of course, you can't separate the two. For the Socialist Workers' Party, whose candidate is Paul Foot, the issue is the social contract, or social con-trick. In search of their committee rooms, I gravitated at first to an empty

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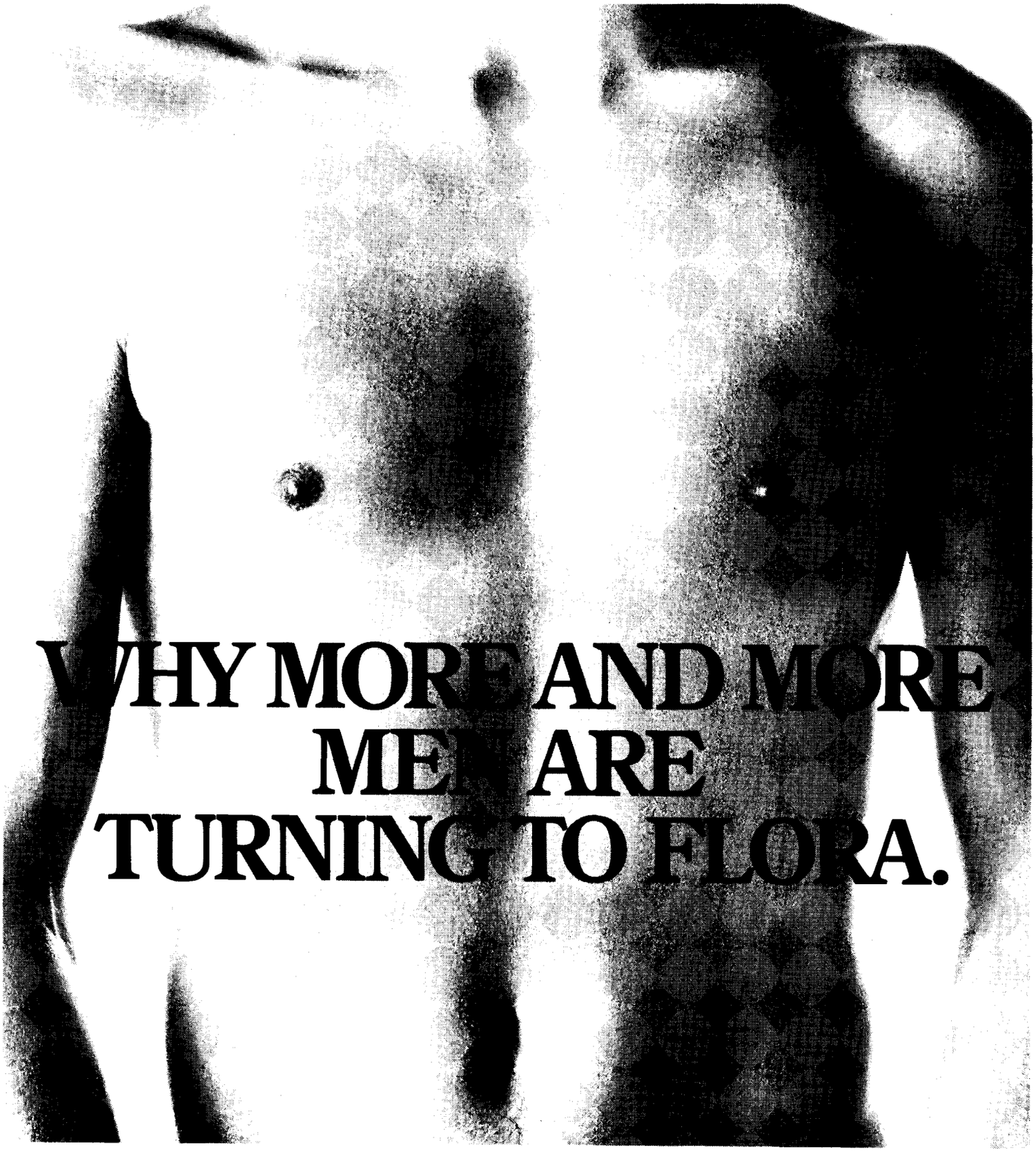

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shop plastered with SWP posters and bearing the legend: 'Paul – Artistic Florist.' A nice footnote, but the committee rooms were a few doors along.

In view of the SWP's insistence that socialism cannot be attained by parliamentary means, it's a little odd to find them fighting elections. It's an opportunity for propaganda, one sees; the SWP has plans to field 50 candidates in a general election (though this won't be possible if it comes soon) and thus get on television. A very pleasant young woman called Sheila MacGregor, who is Birmingham organiser for the SWP, told me: 'We tell people on the doorstep that what's needed is a revolutionary party and ask them to help build it.' There's a long way to go, Miss MacGregor readily agreed; the SWP has 60 members in the city.

When Mr Foot outlined his policy to a meeting of shop stewards at a bus garage, the first question was: 'What about immigration?' and nothing else was talked about from then on. Stechford has a fairly small Asian community, but from what one knows of Birmingham it would be surprising if there was no racist feeling. According to Miss MacGregor (and these SWP people have their ears to the ground) the National Front has been hard at work in Stechford ever since it became known that Roy Jenkins was going to Brussels.

Mr Andrew Mackay, the Conservative candidate, seems determined to outflank the NF. His party is distributing a leaflet with the slogan: 'Stop immigration'. One hadn't realised that this is Tory policy. In fact, it isn't; responsible Tory spokesmen have made it clear that they favour the admission of genuine dependants of immigrants already settled here. Asians in Stechford, I heard, are seriously worried by this adoption of the NF war-cry by the candidate of a major party. Curiously, Mr Mackay has also written a letter to the *Daily Jang* (printed in Urdu) explaining why voters from the New Commonwealth should support him, and making the point that his family has been in Birmingham for four generations. That takes a fair amount of nerve, I'd say.

Mr Davis remarked to me that Mr Mackay would be much wiser to talk about inflation than about immigration. Race isn't an issue in the voters' minds, as Mr Davis sees the situation, and any votes that go to the NF will be purely protest votes of the kind that always tend to go to fringe candidates. Mr Davis, therefore, doesn't talk about race relations or immigration unless someone brings up the subject; then, he explains Government policy. The SWP, on the other hand, instructs all its speakers and canvassers to make the point that race hatred is a weapon used to divide the working-class and blunt opposition to capitalism.

'Racism will grow unless somebody takes the offensive against it,' as Miss MacGregor put it. I must say that I prefer this approach. I seem to remember that last autumn the Labour Party launched a Campaign Against Racism and that I turned out to join a march from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. If you're serious about a campaign, you use a by-election to spread the message. As I left Trafalgar Square I wondered if we'd ever hear any more about the Labour Party's campaign, and it seems that I wasn't too cynical.

Mary Holland

Ulster Learns the Score

For anyone who has ever sat through a House of Commons debate on Northern Ireland and listened to that select half-a-dozen English MPs who ever attend such occasions lecture their Ulster colleagues as neanderthal bigots and worse, the sights and sounds of the early part of this week were a source of quiet, albeit unworthy, amusement. How long is it now since Mr Whitelaw was assuring journalists that no Conservative government would want to hold power if it meant being dependent on the support of the Ulster backwoodsmen? Or since Mr Merlyn Rees and his advisers used to opine, none too discreetly, that Northern Ireland's present crop of representatives were really 'hopeless'?

Ah well. To every dog his day. It would have taken an ungenerous soul indeed to grudge the satisfaction and earnest responsibility on the pinched features of Mr James Molyneaux this weekend as he explained on television how Mr Mason had accosted him in a corridor of the House of Commons and confessed that he had discovered new advantages in Mr Molyneaux's proposals for devolved local government administration in Northern Ireland which had hitherto been completely hidden from him. Equally, it would have been hard not to be, well, intrigued at the idea of Mr Michael Foot conferring with Mr Enoch Powell on the subject of whether Northern Ireland should not, after all, have six more MPs at Westminster. The way things are going the Ulster MPs may even get the last demand to be voiced on their behalf at Westminster – that, failing any forum for political discussion in Northern Ireland itself, the British Government might consider reopening the bar at Stormont to give displaced politicians a place to meet in and to discuss their past and future.

It has all been very diverting back in Belfast. Diverting but not, of course, very instructive. For what the casual encounters and the more formal meetings in the corridors of Westminster demonstrated once again to both sides in Northern Ireland is that their problems are a political football to be ignored for the most part but kicked about with passionate and irresponsible enthusiasm on the rare occasions that external political circumstances demand it. Whatever bitter satisfaction they may have derived from the past few days, the Protestants know that their representatives at Westminster are held for the most part in contempt. If this were not already clear from *Hansard* successive British ministers have wasted no opportunity to apprise them of the fact.

It is, after all, still only a matter of weeks since Mr Mason preached at St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast and singled out for special attack those very Ulster Unionists whom this week he attempted to court. Catholics, on the other hand, didn't even get the brief moments of absurd glory afforded by the past week. They have Gerry Fitt who has voted with the Labour Party ever since he was elected and who must be one of the most unquestioningly loyal pieces of lobby fodder the Government has at its disposal. He did not even get asked about his vote and whether there was any price attached to it. Catholics watched this week as both parties anxiously abased themselves to reach an accommodation with the Ulster MPs whom both regularly denounce as reactionary bigots. They saw the chairman of the Ulster Police Federation being welcomed by the Conservatives at the House of Commons and heard him opine that, in his view, the Tories would be better for Northern Ireland. They remember the past and they remark that it was ever thus. For 50 years they were governed by these very Unionists and their power was guaranteed by a gentlemen's agreement with Westminster.

At the moment there is only one issue here which anyone wants to discuss and that is security, the preservation of life. It isn't only the Unionist MPs who want more of it. Most of their constituents crave it so, probably, do most of the community. Airey Neave is a passionate advocate of it. It seems at least likely that both Mr Mason and Mr Callaghan would be more than willing to hand out more of it. The only problem is that no one any longer has any clear idea of what security means and who should administer it. Does it mean more soldiers on the ground, the death penalty, tougher measures against terrorists and against those communities suspected of harbouring them? If so, who is to carry out these measures? Does security mean giving more arms and powers to the RUC, continuing the current policy of Ulsterisation as the Government and some Ulster MPs want, but which the police themselves adamantly oppose? Or does security mean giving the army a free hand as Mr Neave seems to advocate? To do what? Impose curfews? Occupy border towns? No one seems to know – not the Unionist MPs, not Mr Neave for all his fighting talk, certainly not Mr Mason.

And so the talk of deals, at first diverting, then depressing, finally seemed just irrelevant. A few hours of civilised discussion between Mr Callaghan and Mr Steel may sort out the exact mix of the British economy or the future of the welfare state. It's going to need more than that class of chat to untangle the web of contradictions which now passes for a policy, even a security policy, in Northern Ireland.

Belfast

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Police pay: now for the truth.

Some highly misleading figures on the average pay of Britain's policemen and policewomen have recently been issued by the Official Side of the Police Council.

Here are the true facts - based on the Government's own estimates produced by the Home Office.

1. The average weekly pay of a constable is £70. (Not, as has been claimed, £80.)

2. The average weekly pay of all ranks, from constable to chief inspector, is £75.22. (Not, as has been claimed, £90.)

3. To put these figures in perspective; in December 1976, average earnings for all non-manual male workers in Britain were £88.70 - 27% above the constable's average. (This contrasts with the official statement that the average policeman is being paid 28% more than the average of all adult males in Britain.)

4. In fact, the relative position of police officers is probably even less favourable. The above Government estimates are based on the assumption that policemen work between 4 and 5 hours overtime a week; whereas many forces have reduced or even eliminated overtime as an economy measure.

We hope these figures - and the regrettable necessity of correcting official statements to the public - will show why the Police Federation is determined to press its claim for a fair pay increase for police officers.

And we hope that the public - who benefit every day from the skills, commitment and courage of their police - will lend us their support.

PUBLISHED IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST BY THE POLICE FEDERATION, WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY WORKING POLICE OFFICERS.

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Robin Cook

Counting the Cost of Experience

The nine members of the Defence sub-committee of the Select Committee on Expenditure have the unique privilege of being able to summon the servants of the Ministry of Defence and demand answers from them. The reports of their sub-committee are, therefore, among the rare sources of hard information available about the British defence effort.

Infuriatingly, because of a characteristic British distrust of the public, their reports are first sanitised by the security services, whose chief aim would appear to be to mystify the reader. Consider the following exchange which appears in their latest minutes:

> At, say, day * * * would you still have * * * days' stocks? Have you already built up for the next war between * * * and * * * days' stocks? Do you see what I am getting at?

Well, up to a point, Colonel Copper.

It is tempting to speculate that the same security services might have played a part in the selection process which excluded from membership of this committee – with responsibility for scrutinising the defence budget – a single representative of the hundred-odd members who have expressed concern over its high level. Alas, as usual, the truth is more banal. The Defence sub-committee, which necessarily has to spend much of its time abroad, is very popular and only those who have survived at least three elections can acquire sufficient seniority to hope for membership.

Last week this sub-committee produced a report with the portentous title 'Cumulative Effect of Cuts in Defence Expenditure'. In both their report and their line of questioning they articulate the anxiety which has been expressed within Nato that Britain is letting down the alliance. The Secretary of State may be forgiven for regarding this particular charge as bitterly unjust since much of the present pressure on his budget stems from the ambition of successive governments to play second man within the alliance, long after our steady economic decline had begun to mock our military pretensions. As late as the 1974 Defence Review, Britain was the sole European member of the alliance making a contribution to every Nato theatre of operation both on land and at sea.

Indeed, the extent to which we have created our own difficulties in seeking to prove to Nato that we are loyal team players was vividly illustrated by Fred Mulley during his interrogation by the sub-committee. While fielding a question about the Chieftain engine, which is gaining notoriety for its unreliability, he lamely commented: 'It was our deference to Nato that got us into the difficulty, because it was Nato doctrine that all countries develop multi-fuel engines. We were the only ones to do it.'

In any event criticism from Nato or the Defence sub-committee of cuts in our defence budget is premature. The level of our defence expenditure shows an impressive stability which has proved impervious to Labour's election commitment to reduce it. The figures produced in the report itself show that when Labour took over from the last Conservative Government it inherited a defence budget for 1974-75 of £5,476m. By the current financial year (1976-77) that figure had swollen to £5,632m., despite six separate announcements of defence 'cuts' in the intervening period. Admittedly programmed expenditure for the next two years shows a slight dip to just below the level of 1974-75, but by 1980-81 and the years beyond it is scheduled to spiral up to £5,800m.

Where, then, are the cuts? What has been cut is not the actual expenditure we inherited from the Tories but the projected increases which they had hoped to make. Unfortunately for Fred Mulley the British system of annual publication of expenditure levels for the next five years makes such 'cuts' uniquely visible, whereas most other Nato governments do not publish their forward budgets in such detail and can therefore revise them without the same risk of coming under fire from their partners in the alliance. As Mr Mulley wryly observed to the Defence sub-committee, 'Perhaps they are wiser than we are'.

Now, in condemning the Government for dropping the programmed increases the sub-committee is guilty of a reprehensible lapse of memory. Only two years ago they themselves issued a report which concluded that 'a major defence review in 1974 would have been inevitable . . . and it was evident that the projections for later years would have to be revised downwards'. For good measure the same report repeated their concern over 'the very serious implications for future expenditure if the Ministry of Defence continued to base their forward budget on unrealistic projections of growth in GNP'. The 1974 Defence Review was based by the Ministry of Defence on the assumption of 3 per cent growth and now that is revealed as hopelessly unrealistic the inevitable implication for defence expenditure is a farther downward revision. The nervous members of the Defence sub-committee are in the unsatisfactory position of both voicing concern when unrealistic increases are included in the forward defence budget and again when they are subsequently excluded.

Ironically, the very fact that our defence budget has been based on the assumption of 3 per cent growth in GNP has imposed burdens on the economy which have made it even more difficult to attain that target. The most onerous of these burdens is the foreign exchange handicap carried by our current defence posture. Curiously the exchange costs of the defence budget are not only ignored by the Defence sub-committee in their most recent report but have received not a comment from them in the current Parliament. This is all the more striking since in the same period the declining value of the pound has added to those costs.

In 1965-66 the foreign exchange costs of BAOR was £84m. which was nearly balanced by an offset agreement of £58m. By last year the foreign exchange costs had climbed to £403m. whilst the value of the offset had dwindled to £44m. In the current year the foreign exchange penalty is expected to exceed £500m. and there is *no* offset agreement in operation since Chancellor Schmidt apparently resents such payments as a hangover from the days of occupation.

The defence drain on our foreign exchange over the past five years alone comes to a similar sum to the loan we recently had to beg from the IMF, mortgaging Britain's oil and pawning Labour's principles as part of the bargain. The refreshingly altruistic nature of these payments is only fully apparent when we remember that the main recipient has been West Germany who is also our main industrial competitor. Even the German Federal Bank has noted that in 1975 their economy gained £1,400m. from the presence of foreign troops. It is beyond belief that Britain, which has one of the worst balance of payments deficits in the West, should participate in contributions of this order to the one economy in Europe in record surplus.

Yet it is no more extraordinary than that Britain, although now very much one of the poor relatives of the alliance, should still provide Nato with its second largest navy *and* its third largest land force on the central front. What is truly extraordinary is that a sub-committee of the Expenditure Committee should be surprised that we are no longer able to pick up the cheque.

Roger Woddis

Set a Thief

Many security firms are said to be run by men with criminal records.

There's Fatso and Fingers and Terry the Tyke,
There's Nick who's done seven years hard,
There's Charlie who's chuffed with his Yamaha bike
(They've got him in file at the Yard),
So if it's a break-in or breaking a strike,
You'll need a security guard.

There's Razor who's sharp and he doesn't miss much,
There's Knuckles who wrestles in Bow,
There's Jaws who hates gyppos and Pakis and such,
And laughs when he's having a go,
So whether it's cash or a kick in the crutch,
Just telephone Coshers and Co.

We've vetted the villains we've got on our books,
We've screened them and tested their skill,
Your wages are carried by qualified crooks
Who've trained at the Scrubs or the 'Ville,
And won't charge a penny for changing your looks
If you're slow-like in paying your bill.

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Peter Wilby

Heady Days

These are heady days for the Black Paper brigade, once dismissed as educational flat-earthers. The Department of Education itself has been issuing, if not Black Papers, then documents of a decidedly grey hue. Concern about standards in schools has been sweeping not only this country but Europe and North America, too. Even the Swedes have a 'back to basics' movement.

Naturally, the editors cannot resist a note of triumph in this new edition*:

> In October 1976, Mr Callaghan, the Prime Minister, attempted to steal our clothes, which have always been freely available. He repeated our assertions that money is being wasted, standards are too low and children are not being given the basic tools of literacy and numeracy.

Actually, Mr Callaghan said none of these things. Otherwise, this is a tired, predictable and uninspiring collection. Stuart Froome, the statutory right-wing member of the Bullock committee on literacy, explains why he signed a note of dissent to the committee's report. Dolly Walker, the chief anti-trendy on the William Tyndale staff, attributes that school's complex troubles to a left-wing conspiracy. Professor C. B. Cox writes in praise of a Northern primary school where the head put seven and eight-year-olds in ability streams and used the cane once a month. This, apparently, was allied to 'an easy warmth to which children respond'. Professor Hans Eysenck warns of the dangers of positive discrimination in favour of minorities. The dean and chaplain of Peterhouse, Cambridge, inveighs against the 'moral relativism' implicit in new approaches to religious education. Professor Max Beloff writes about his Independent University and his sister, Mrs Renee Soskin, reports on her disillusionment with Liberal Party education policy.

Still, there are some good things, particularly an essay on teacher training by a Loughborough college lecturer. R. W. Baldwin, chairman of the governors at Manchester Grammar School, deserves attention for his presentation of detailed evidence suggesting that the examination results of the comprehensive schools are worse than the combined results of grammar and secondary modern schools. The onus is on the comprehensive lobby to answer, if it can, this kind of criticism.

Above all, the supporters of comprehensives must decide whether they believe that statistics based on the existing examination system are an adequate measure of schooling success or whether we ought to develop some other measures. This is the kind of problem that hardly ever occurs to Black Paper contributors. They have no positive and constructive proposals for the improvement of schools, except essentially structural ones such as more tests and more grammar schools. They write glibly about the need, on the one hand, to develop our best brains and, on the other, to ensure that all children leave school fully equipped with basic skills. Might not too much attention to the first jeopardise the achievement of the latter? We could give the top 5 per cent individual tuition and their brains no doubt would develop even better than they do now. Even Black Paper supporters would admit that that was too high a price to pay. But how do we arrive at the right balance?

'The future prosperity and progress of the country in every possible field depends on developing and encouraging that precious and rare asset – good brains' writes Mrs Soskin. What evidence does she have for her statement? Is she quite sure that future prosperity and progress do not depend on the development and encouragement of mediocre brains? Or, put another way, do not mediocre brains have equal rights to development and encouragement?

There is only one thought-provoking contribution on the curriculum. And it is hair-raising. Professor Geoffrey Bantock would have an elite concentrating on highly academic cognitive education, based on books and traditional academic subjects. He would have the rest, as I understand it, dancing, modelling, painting, taking photographs,

*Black Paper 1977 edited by C. B. Cox and Rhodes Boyson TEMPLE SMITH £1.65

Has Oxford a future?

In a special four-page report on the state of Oxford, Peter Wilby examines the University's creaking admissions system, its tangled finances, its still strong academic reputation, its colleges and their Fellows. He asks whether Oxford is making adequate efforts to ensure that it is relevant to the needs of our present-day society and concludes: "Yes. But..."

Also: Richard Hoggart discusses how the spirit of universities has changed since the end of the 1960s. Dennis Marsden on the cycle of deprivation.

THE TIMES Higher Education SUPPLEMENT

Every Friday 18p

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watching films, preparing food and learning simple hygiene. I do not know whom to pity more.

There are real dangers in this Black Paper, as there were not when the first appeared in 1969. The developments of recent years have created a growing awareness of the need for more rigour in education, for closer attention to teaching technique, for a clearer definition of objectives, for more careful monitoring of children's progress. There is a chance that, at last, schools can get the best out of the post-war ferment of ideas. But if teachers are led to believe that the new rigour inevitably means reaction, the chance will be lost. People will be forced back into opposing camps of 'progressive' and 'reactionary', with the latter perhaps strengthened but with no gain at all to education. C. B. Cox is right to praise a school that achieves good reading results because it gives the skill proper emphasis and keeps careful records. But does he have to choose one of the estimated 5 per cent of primary schools that still go in for any form of streaming? If Professor Cox were really concerned to win converts for sounder educational methods, he could have found hundreds of schools that achieve good reading results in working-class areas without the aid of streaming or corporal punishment. But, of course, Black Paper contributors are not really concerned with education at all, but with the preservation of ancient privilege and power. They are the true social engineers.

Robert Giddings

Uneven Keele

The Secretary of State for Social Services recently wrote me a letter. Among other things he said that the decision taken to phase-out the invalid tricycle and replace it with a £5-a-week mobility allowance 'was not taken lightly'. I should jolly well hope it was not. Do these bureaucrats know what they are doing? It might well be argued that the campaign about the three-wheelers was an example of badly directed protest. They were right to insist on the inadequacies of the invalid trike, but they hardly anticipated the result. The hope was for adapted cars. At the end of the day we have no vehicles and five quid a week. And that is bad. Leaflet N1 219 spells it out. But the whole truth is even worse than this mildly worded document implies. This marks the end of romance.

Those three-wheelers had something. It is true, they made courting difficult (but not totally impossible) but they had an aura of Ninetyish charm. Not only that; those of us compelled to use them sometimes landed up in romantic, not to say melodramatic, situations, like the time my machine conked out during my week teaching for the Open University's annual summer school at Keele. On the first Sunday afternoon I dismissed my class after a fairly exhausting session of *Hamlet*, paid my respects to the bust of Princess Margaret, so happily displayed in the Gothic splendours of Keele Hall, clambered aboard my three-wheeler and set off through the circuitous route forced upon me in order to avoid the obligatory baronial steps at the front of the Hall. Madness and method combined here to compel me to traverse the whole of the elaborately planned and maintained lawns, flora and vegetation of the Sneyd family seat. I was at the lowest point of this course, beside a lake where a willow grows aslant a brook, when it happened.

In action how unlike an angel this carriage. It simply stopped. The afternoon had grown suddenly wet. A storm such as would have satisfied King Lear had sprung up. As I recalled from my student days here, these gardens were always full on Sunday afternoons with staff and students taking their dogs/girlfriends for walks – but here I was on my own, with not even a dog to bark at me as I halted by them.

Ah well, someone is bound to hear me, I thought consolingly as I pressed the horn button. Ten minutes later the latter had croaked it and I was still alone. It was still raining. But I had my secret weapon. A bugle preserved from days in the Boys' Brigade which had saved me from many a solitary fate. When, Huon-like, I raised it to my lips, Panda cars and lumbering long-distance lorries alike lurched to a halt and thousands at its bidding speed and post o'er roads and lay-bys without rest.

I blew. And blew. I called all the calls I know, from Cookhouse to General Salute. I was still alone. It was still raining. It was also growing darker. 'If something doesn't happen soon I'm going to stay here all night.' The words involuntarily crossed my mind. I must get out and make something happen. I slid the door open, unfolded my chair and sat on its already rain-soaked cushion. Rain lashing my steamy glasses I gradually panned from left to right and took in the whole scene. I was at the bottom of the gardens, totally out of sight from the back of Keele Hall. In front of me three large lawns, separate with shingle paths, gradually sloped up to the verandah which ran round the back of the Hall. To my left ran the impossibly steep path to the refectory. To my right the path extended pointlessly into what could well be miles of flowerbeds. There was nothing else for it. Somehow I must hump myself up across those three lawns and on to the verandah. I soon began to grunt and sweat but slowly traversed the first lawn – tacking like a boat against the lashing rain and a strong headwind – gaining a few yards at enormous expense of effort. I was soon soaked to the skin. My hair was plastered to my head, the chair so wet I could hardly grasp the rims to propel it.

Somehow I crossed those lawns and paths and finally made it on to the verandah. There was bound to be help inside, hundreds of people. I went the whole distance from one end to the other. Not a sign of life. All locked up. All lights out. I pulled the bugle out from under my coat and placed it to my bursting lips. The sound died amidst the wind and rain. I hoped Childe Roland had better luck. Another tour of the verandah, this time banging on doors and windows, with added calls for help. I tried banging a bit harder and scored a hit, a palpable hit. That is to say I smashed in a large plate glass window and heard the fragmented sections fall in on the furniture.

Well, I'd done it now. All the burglar alarms in the place will go. But at least I'd get some help. I waited, expecting any second to hear running booted feet and the excited yelps of action starved guard-dogs. Not a sound. Except the rain. Except the rain. Then voices. Was it possible? – voices from somewhere below me. Then I saw the wall at the end of the patio. I trundled over to it and looked over. I realised I was looking down on to the path which led to the front of the Hall. A group of people were down there, or so I surmised from the phalanx of umbrellas I was looking down on. 'A rescue! A rescue!' I called. A face looked up. 'What's the trouble? Who is it?' 'It's me.' Soon hands were laid on me and I was carried down the steps and into the hall. I made straight for the porter's lodge to report the terrible damage I had wreaked and to get some help for my sodden carriage. There were bound to be maintenance men on an estate like this. But it was just my luck, Lanky was on duty. Lanky, as I recalled from student days here, was renowned for his *malhomie*. In an area justly celebrated for its generosity, kindness and friendly tolerance, Lanky stood out alone, as a representative of those ancient English virtues of suspicion, insularity, narrowness of spirit, half-hearted malice and indifference.

'Hello. I'm having a spot of trouble.'

'Oh yes.'

'Yes. You see, my invalid carriage has broken down. It's in the gardens. I can't get it started.'

'That'll be all right Mr Giddings. It won't be in anyone's way until they come on duty tomorrow.'

'Well, that's not the point. You see, I'll have no transport to move about the campus with.'

'Yes. I see that. Difficult for you. I don't know why they give you people these things. A waste of the taxpayers' money. Completely unreliable. But there's nothing I can do. I can't leave this office.' (He was known universally as Moronmyjobsworth.)

'Are there any maintenance staff on duty now who could help me?' His sharp intake of breath I took as a negative response. He needed careful handling. Rashly, and praised be rashness for it, I decided to tell him about the broken window. That got some action.

'How do you spell Giddings?' he asked, reaching for his Breakages Book. 'I think you had better accompany me to see the Summer School Director.'

We went. He was very affable about it and told me – much to Lanky's undisguised horror – to go and break a few more windows as they were cheaper by the dozen. My machine was rescued and repaired by a Technology student (here a silent prayer for Lord Snow and the Two Cultures) and I went into supper. It is just as well things turned out as they did, otherwise the Open University might have achieved its first ghost – the Phantom Trumpeter of Keele Hall. Remember me. Anyway, it will make a chapter in my forthcoming book, *Ennals and the Art of Tricycle Maintenance*.

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London Diary

☐ There has been one enormous, but largely unnoticed, gap in all the recent talk about representative democracy. We hear how the present system is unfair to Liberals, unfair to Scots, unfair to . . . well, you name them and someone will prove conclusively that it's unfair to them too. But for some reason much less attention has been paid lately than at any time I can remember to the most under-represented sector of all. Women. This week, the representatives of a UK population of 56 million, more than half of whom are women, decided the fate of the Government. There are 635 MPs; only 27 of them are women, and mostly Labour women at that; a pathetic 4¼ per cent of the total. I don't believe that we should legislate for 300-odd women MPs to make government work, or indeed to speed us towards socialism. But the figure betrays a contempt for women, a disposition against them, which it will take more than the discrimination laws to change. It also betrays, as Barbara Castle has often said, a contempt for women *of themselves*, We don't put in and fight.

☐ Goodness though, the prospect of Margaret Thatcher makes me feel young again. Young in the worst sense, in the terrified-schoolgirl sense of foreboding, of inability to control one's one destiny, above all of inadequacy. There looms that cool prettiness, that moral certitude, that overriding competence. I thought this perfection would make many women voters dislike Mrs Thatcher, since they (we) are traditionally assumed to shy from women in positions of power. A straw poll in the NS office confirmed that most of us thought of her as an old-fashioned headmistress figure, ticking one off for not trying hard enough. But a proper poll (by Market and Opinion Research International) in the *Express* on Monday proved we weren't typical. Women are turning to Mrs Thatcher in thousands. The Tory lead of 7 per cent calculated by MORI, we were told, 'comes from the support of the women in the sample, 49 per cent of whom said they would vote Tory . . .' When Mrs Thatcher became leader of the Tory party, one male member of the NS's staff who shall be nameless said it was 'bad luck on her being a woman, as the country would never tolerate a second queen'. But maybe that's exactly what a lot of people do want.

☐ One queen, though, has finally proved enough for India. After the excesses of the last two years, it would be easy enough to write with *Schadenfreude* about the fall of Indira Gandhi. But any such feelings must surely be quelled by the revolting spectacle of so many people dancing on her political grave. The only sensation left is one of sadness. The broken promises, the high hopes destroyed. And the same is true of the hopes pinned to other leaders of the Asian sub-continent – to Mr Bhutto, for instance, who was going to lead his country towards democracy; to the late Sheik Mujib, everyone's hero during the Bangladesh war of liberation. The idols have fallen. But in all fairness, they had been toppling for some time, and it took the particular stupidity of the British Left not to recognise the fact. Witness Mr Michael Foot, who even after the row over his visit to India last autumn, was 'sure that Mrs Gandhi is strongly in favour of trying to sustain democratic conditions in India'; and that 'you have to take into account all the conditions'. I'm afraid the Right are only too often justified when they accuse the Left of selective blindness. Mr Foot and his admirers have had the sense lately to keep their heads down. But not all memories are short: and their original position was all too fatefully reminiscent of the Webbs coming back rejoicing from a visit to Stalin's Russia.

☐ It's not generally known, I think, outside Fleet Street, precisely how newspapers go about filching each other's best stories. In the case of the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer,* for instance – closer rivals than ever since Atlantic Richfield's takeover of the *Observer* – there is a gentleman's agreement about swapping first editions as they begin to 'drop' around 6.15 p.m. on Saturday. Like most such agreements, it has been arrived at *faute de mieux*, because no conceivable security system would be proof against collusion or bribery. But the gentlemanly part is supposed to mean giving some kind of attribution to the paper which had the original story. Last Sunday, the *Observer*'s Adam Raphael had got an exclusive – a draft of the Annan Report on the future of broadcasting, and the *Observer* did him proud. Front-page headlines in a far larger type than usual, virtually the whole of page three devoted to a resumé of the Report and so on. The *Sunday Times* did him proud, too, in their later editions – front-page headlines etc., and the very same extracts from the Report all over page four. Both not by a single word did they credit the *Observer*. No, sorry, they did manage one tiny churlish phase. Adam Raphael wrote, mistakenly, that Tom Jackson of the Post Office Workers Union was one of the minority group who want BBC Radio and TV to be split up. The *Sunday Times* pointed this out in a lordly way remarking, 'not as reported elsewhere'. And in so doing they fell into their own trap and added, wrongly, Mr Jackson was a Governor of the BBC which he has not been for some years. There is some natural justice after all.

☐ At first I thought Charlotte Brew had let the side down. On 2 April she will be the first woman jockey to ride in the Grand National, and a lot of girlish dreams will go with her. But she seemed over-modest about her chances. She did say, as ritually she must, that 'anything can happen in the National'. But she then went on record as fancying either Red Rum or Forest King above her own horse, Barony Fort. Yet on reflection this is an example of the straightforwardness of most top sportswomen, far removed from the jolly hockey-sticks image. The doyenne of them all is of course Rachael Heyhoe-Flint, the English Cricket captain, who is probably even better known for her appearances on *Any Questions?*. On that programme, among so many self-elected moral authorities, she is the only person who can get away with saying that it's the game which matters, not winning, without making her audience feel slightly sick.

☐ Curious sense of humour our readers have, if the entries for 'This England' are anything to go by. It was my turn to sort them out this week (incidentally, since we do it by turns, there is no point in enclosing pleas or threats). We are used to items overlapping, but this week one stood out, with 20 or more entries: a news items to the effect that a kidney donor form was being enclosed now with all provisional driving licences. This seems to me perhaps marginally funny, but eminently sensible. Given the young average age of most learner-drivers, the leaflet could catch them when death seems a long way off and donating bits of oneself, more noble than frightening. Contrariwise, it might act as a dreadful reminder of the lethal powers any car-driver takes to himself; that can't be bad.

☐ In my household, watching LWT's re-run of *Edward VII* on Sunday afternoons, we are much exercised as to whether Elizabeth II will treat Prince Charles the way Victoria treated poor frustrated (in his desire to work, I mean) Bertie. Perhaps – it's not a totally frivolous suggestion – Charles should be sent off to cheer up the Irish, or keep them quiet, or whatever, as Gladstone abortively conspired to do with the future King a century ago. We fear though that, like Mrs Thatcher, the Queen may decide that life begins at 51; and that it was a *great* mistake to take her son from the Navy and put him in show-business.

Corinna Adam

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Lady Cudlipp's gentle feminine manner disguises an acute brain and organising abilities of a very high order. Once the editor of a national women's magazine, she now runs the Cudlipp home, does the cooking and gardening, and is always available to her many friends. On my recent visit she emerged triumphantly from the kitchen with a tray of dog-biscuits, which she had just baked in honour of a newly acquired puppy. – *Chichester Observer* (Iris Kershaw)

☐ Throughout the ages, man has yearned and strived for adventure and achievement. To conquer the impossible drove Hillary to the peak of Everest, Armstrong to the moon and David McNee to the commissionership of the Metropolitan Police.' – *Listener*, quoting from *Tonight* (P.M.G. Shiel)

☐ Mr John Lucas, fellow of Merton College, who led the opposition to the resolution, said that if it was passed it would be the starting pistol for a race in which the colleges would try to beat all the others in grabbing the best girls for themselves. – *Guardian* (John Gowing)

☐ Aircraft crashed on Cheltenham racecourse. Racing delayed. – *Oldham Evening Chronicle* (R. L. Keogh)

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University Forum

Martin Rosenbaum*

Democracy in Schools

The British education system is supposed to be undergoing a searching self-examination of its methods and ideals. The Prime Minister has called for a 'national debate on education' in which the administrators, the theorists, the teachers and the parents should naturally take part. Although the National Union of School Students has been invited to the regional conferences it seems that otherwise very little notice will be taken of the views of those who actually consume the education services provided.

This will not surprise anyone with any knowledge of our education system. For even in the individual schools the pupils are expected to behave something like airline passengers who have to obey without question the instructions of those in authority. The legal authority structure in state schools is laid down by the 1944 Education Act which says: 'Responsibility for the whole internal organisation, management and discipline of the school is vested in the head, together with the control of both teaching and non-teaching staff.' Thus how much power teachers, parents and pupils each have in the running of a school is really up to the head himself, leading to wide variations.

Most head teachers rightly attach a lot of importance to the views of their staff but are much more reluctant to be influenced by their pupils. They may respond favourably to the occasional piece of constructive criticism but are unwilling to seek regularly their thoughts on the school. A number of dictatorial heads simply try to discipline out of existence any pupil opposition to their own aims. For example, the headmaster of Bacon's School in South London, presented with a petition signed by over 100 boys and girls asking for fifth-form boys to be allowed longer hair, sent them home and then informed the parents: 'I cannot have the school administered or governed by pupils.'

The free flow of information and ideas between pupils and the authorities is hindered by two aspects of the archaic British education system. The first of these is the variety of petty rules to which most British school students are subject, especially in matters of personal appearance such as school uniform and hair length. This kind of thing has nothing to do with the educational process and simply antagonises school students. The second is corporal punishment. There can hardly be a free flow of ideas between two sections of the school community when one is legally allowed to beat the other – besides being barbaric, by virtue of example it breeds violence.

This is a truly undemocratic system. Education is meant to be for the benefit of school students yet nobody with power has to ask us what they think is for our benefit. We are the basis of schools yet practically everything from dinner arrangements to subject choice is decided for us. We do the learning, but have no say in what we learn. School students, who are on the receiving end of education, do have sensible views about it, and it is only sensible that they have a channel for expressing it.

Fears that increased school democracy would lead to more rather than less disciplinary problems are misguided. In crude terms, if we are frustrated by the way we are educated we can react either constructively or destructively. We can try to improve the system or we can chuck a brick through a window. The more we are allowed to express our grievances and the more these are satisfied the fewer broken windows there will be. The present high rates of truancy and vandalism are the direct result of students not being given a say in decisions. People try harder to make a go of decisions they have had a hand in.

But this lack of democracy is not only harmful to schools themselves but also to society in general. If it is generally accepted that a major purpose of education is to prepare pupils for their 'role' later in life, perhaps it is no coincidence that the majority of pupils are processed through the educational system with little power to alter their environment. This problem was acknowledged as long ago as July 1968 by Ted Short in a speech to the Association of Education Committees when he said: 'The educational system alone can make a democracy adequate to the tasks facing it. Educational institutions, whether schools, colleges or universities can give their students experience of democracy. Much can be done through the whole educational system to enable our young people to acquire a sense of responsibility towards the running of the community.' The Government is tentatively encouraging democracy in industry but what has any government done to encourage similar participation in schools? Very little, and as a result pupils in secondary schools have in recent years begun to organise among themselves to present a stronger voice.

There were a number of protests in London schools between 1969 and 1972, mostly organised by the now defunct Schools Action Union. The National Union of School Students was set up in May 1972 to provide some continuity in the school student movement and to give it a coherent and organised voice. In the past four years membership of the NUSS has grown to 15,000 and it is fast gaining credibility as a responsible national representative of school student interests. The basis of its work is done in members' own school branch. The top body of the union is the annual national conference and in between these it is run by a national committee of 16 which meets every six weeks, working on a budget of about £8,000.

The period has seen definite progress in three particular areas. First, the idea of a school student union has become more acceptable. Originally, many headteachers responded to any attempts at NUSS organisation with expulsion or suspension. A friend of mine was suspended from Orange Hill School in Barnet for 12 weeks during which time a campaign was mounted. He was allowed back only when the deputy education officer by mistake sent a letter intended for the school's headmaster to the boy's parents which stated that he wanted him to return to the school but not in such a way as to make it seem that the NUSS was responsible for his return. This kind of attack on unionisation by the authorities, while still fairly common, is dying down.

Secondly, school councils have been introduced in many schools. These are at the least a symbolic step forward in that they recognise that it is good to seem to pay attention to the opinions of school students. There are exceptions, but in too many schools they are merely weak talking-shops, provided often to fob pupils off with participation on the colour of the common room and curtains or plans for the school fête. Restricted in their agenda, they are totally ignored by the headteacher when he finds it convenient.

Thirdly, pupil governors of schools are becoming more common, although few local education authorities give them full voting rights. This development is important on two fronts. A pupil governor will be able to explain to his fellow pupils the reasons for decisions which may be administratively necessary but seem arbitrary to school students kept in the dark. Boards of governors are legally entitled to override any expulsion or suspensions by the headteacher: a pupil governor could petition the case of the victimised colleague.

But these remedies are only short-term palliatives. A new system of school government is necessary. The NUSS is not a 'pupil-power' organisation as the headlines try to portray it; it recognises that teachers and parents are also fundamentally involved in and concerned about education. But the NUSS argues that secondary schools should be controlled by a proper system of school councils which consist of equal numbers of representatives of teachers, parents and pupils with also some representatives of the non-academic staff and local community. Then a balanced debate can be conducted through the schools.

The most common objection to a system such as this is that it is impractical because children are 'immature', 'that it just wouldn't work'. But in Sweden and Finland there have now been in operation for several years schemes which do give 'children' a say in their education and they do work. British school students are just as capable of being mature and responsible as their counterparts in Scandinavia. We are hearing a great deal of talk about standards, but surely in this great 'national debate' more people should be listening to those most directly involved – the pupils themselves.

Martin Rosenbaum is Treasurer of The National Union of School Students.

University Forum will resume in our issue of 22 April. Contributions for the next series, preferably timed to arrive before 15 April, should be sent to the editor and marked 'University Forum'.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Smelling as Sweet

In a rather pathetic attempt to improve, somewhat late in the day, my 'image', to use the modish word, I am considering the possibility of changing my names. I have already dolefully written of the hopelessness of 'Arthur'. My surname, even with its fine military ring, is pretty ordinary. There are four packed pages of us in L-R, including 22 plain (I'll say) A. Marshalls. My humdrum names, allied to 'Myrtlebank', really get me nowhere and I'm thinking of changing the house's name too. As to my own new name, I am happily in a position to bolster it up a little and make myself seem a tiny bit more interesting. On emerging from the army, I received from the War Office a politely worded letter of thanks for my minimal contribution in helping to give old Jerry what for, coupled with the information that for the rest of my days I could use the rank of Lt.-Col. All my friends instantly said that the document was plainly a forgery but I have it still and it *seems* all right.

But after Lt.-Col., what as a Christian name? It's got to be something rather on the fancy side. I must confess to being a little drawn towards Ughtred. It is true that anything that starts with 'Ugh!' gets off at a disadvantage, but on the other hand the name is a compound of ancient words for 'meditation' and 'counsel'. I add a few more names which you may care to try out yourselves for sound – Tancred, Humbert, Chauncey, Ambrose and Blaise. I rule out Aldhelm which merely means 'old helmet' and seems quite pointless.

When it comes to a new surname. I must aim at something really distinctive. I did have a sort of yearning for Sheepshanks, but S-Z shows me that it exists already in sufficient abundance. Once more, let us try out one or two on the tongue – Cowmeadow, Cordukes, Woof, Flowerdew (insufficiently manly), Twiceaday, Moule (too linked in the mind with *marinière*), Ashkettle, Kneebone and Habbijams. Then by luck I hit on one which both inspires confidence and is quite unknown to the directory. Now, as to the house, I flirted for a time with 'Broad Acres' but then realised that any mention of acres is vulgar. They will be assumed to be there, and in impressive quantity. It must be a name that suggests opulence, a *mélange* of other noble, even ducal, buildings allied to the word Park. Those who raise their eyebrows scornfully may care to know that the grounds of 'Myrtlebank' include some pastureland with trees, six in number, planted in it. Well, that ranks as a Park, doesn't it? So there we are then – Lt.-Col. Ughtred Shipshape, Goodworth Park, near Exeter. Do drop in.

There is of course nothing novel about the wish to change names. In 1391 BC in Egypt, Amenhotep IV gave himself that much needed lift by becoming Akhnaton I. Eight centuries later, Siddhartha Gautama ('Sid' for short) decided that 'Buddha' ('the enlightened one') might be an easier mouthful. In 1666 a German monk called Ulrich Megerle shattered the monastery by switching overnight to Abraham-a-Santa Clara, a name which seems to cover everything. Writers have frequently found it convenient to shelter behind an invention and we find the Danish philosopher, Kierkegaard, masquerading for a time, not very happily, as Hilarius Bogbinder.

But it is when we come to the world of entertainment that the euphonious imaginings flow, and how wisely, thick and fast (we owe these, incidentally, to the splendid researches of J. F. Clarke, who has unearthed 3,400 of them in his *Pseudonyms*, brought to us by Elm Tree Books at £5.50). Strolling up Shaftesbury Avenue in search of a good play and rather doubtfully purchasing seats for a stark, modern piece called, let us say, 'Lust is Silent', we see with amazement that the play 'stars' Ada Thompson, Patsy Sloots and Feodora Forde. No need to worry for we shall in point of fact be going to see the gifted trio of Vivien Merchant, Susan Shaw and Jane Baxter. Or shall it be a delightfully old-fashioned musical film and there, in Leicester Square we see 'Calling the Tune' with Tula Finklea, Frederick Austerlitz and Frances Gumm. Staged by William Enos. Take courage for we are about to be entertained by the talents of Cyd Charisse, Fred Astaire and Judy Garland, with their efforts directed by Busby Berkeley.

Hollywood has always made the greatest imaginable fuss over names. It took the studios nearly a year to dream up Jennifer Jones for Phyllis Isley. When, in 1923, a handsome chorus-girl was wishful to burst into films and a director asked her her name, she confessed that it was Lucille le Sueur ('Well, honey, you certainly picked a fancy one'). She eventually faced the world, successfully enough, as Joan Crawford. Tony Curtis had rapidly to get rid of Bernard Schwartz ('Schwartz', Mr Goldstein said, 'ain't a name to get you into the big time – not even George Bernard Schwartz'). Performers have usually been ready to conform, and thus Harlean Carpentier becomes Jean Harlow, Lillian Klot is Georgia Brown, Marion (!) Morrison is John Wayne, Archibald Leach is Cary Grant and Joanne la Cock is Joanne Dru. One name change is to be regretted, that of Clifton Webb. The original one would have suited him, his appearance and his film roles admirably. It was Parmalee Hollenbeck.

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Letters to the Editor

The Left and Growth

Sir, We may learn as well as laugh at the spectacle that Wilfred Beckerman conjured up at the start of his reply (NS 18 March) to my article 'Towards the No-Growth Society'. An Oxford teacher of economics, annoyed at talk among the populace about whether economic growth is the cure-all it is cracked up to be, sets aside serious study to write a book to still the argument. *Merde*! the unrest goes on. Professor Beckerman has failed to silence the debate, not because of the defects in his book *In Defence of Economic Growth*, considerable though they were; not because people resist his personal style of *de haut en bas*, risible and revealing though that be, but because it is increasingly apparent that economic growth does not deliver in the manner that it should. Inequality in the world grows, unemployment hangs about street corners. The long-term quality of life is gravely threatened.

In this light what is most interesting about Beckerman's reply is the insight it gives into the mind of the growth economist. The actual detailed arguments he deploys become rather a side-show after he reveals that he considers the world's resources are infinite. I thought even the most backward public schoolboy on special cramming had gathered that we live in a side-show after he reveals that he considers point is never forgotten: even at this moment there is a United Nations conference in Argentina into the shortage of that common resource, water. If Beckerman thinks resources are to all intents and purposes infinite, then of course he cannot understand zero growth – the idea of a stable or steady state society, ticking over. He raises the *non sequitur* of negative growth for want of a reply. What he reveals is extreme technological optimism and advocacy of vandalism on a massive scale – mining into the centre of the earth, etc. When he says 'some estimates suggest that the top mile of the earth's crust contains enough mineral resources to keep us going for 100 million years' he forgets the notion that resources divide into those which are winnable and those which are to all intents and purposes lost because of the massive amounts of energy needed to get them.

Beckerman's gay assurance about resources is not worth very much; after all he tells us that one of the necessary conditions for respecting authority is that the person concerned should be an authority on the subject in question, and Beckerman is not an authority on resources. But his assurance does seem to make a little more sense when one takes one sentence: 'Anyway why should one want the human race to survive indefinitely?' Beckerman does not paint a picture of what life will be like for the Last Generation, but clearly the notion of stewardship, of having this planet in trust, has not occurred to him. In truth, I find his statement in its rank selfishness utterly obnoxious.

But what is really behind it is a kind of thought-resistance, the attitude of the clerics who quoshed Copernican theory for a couple of hundred years. A few years ago, the mass of people came to recognise that we live in a thin biological envelope, 'dependent on a few feet of soil and a few miles of air' as Jeremy Swift said. Beckerman and others will, I guess, be no more successful at holding back development of an economic and social order that respects this envelope than the anti-Copernicans. In the meantime he can try, if he likes, to argue that economic growth has not brought great equality only because 'redistribution has not gone far or fast enough' – this after six years of Labour rule in the last decade – but he won't take many of us in.

JEREMY BUGLER

41 Canonbie Road
London SE23

Sir, Jeremy Bugler is right to warn of a totalitarian response to a no-growth society if the democratic Left continues to ignore the arguments of the environmentalist lobby (NS 11 March). It was this concern which prompted the establishment of SERA (Socialist Environment and Resources Association) after the Labour Party conference of 1973.

Fortunately there are now many promising signs that the Labour movement is beginning to take notice. The increasing influence of SERA which Mr Bugler mentioned in his article is one. Others are the Lucas and Vickers shop steward committee campaigns for the socially useful and environmentally sound work and the Green Ban movement, designed to give trade unionists etc. a say in the use to which open space is put. There is also a growing awareness amongst Labour activists that smaller, more decentralised, less automated industrial units are not only better for the environment but also create more jobs.

We are not, incidentally, gloomy about the prospect of a steady-state economy, provided of course that it is brought about within a socialist framework. By avoiding waste, more recycling and greater emphasis on domestic food production there should be ample scope for maintaining comfortable living standards for everyone. Our losses in terms of frivolous consumption (e.g. electric butter warmers) should be more than compensated by having more control over our own lives, an end to the rat-race for status symbols and a greater sense of community with our fellow men.

After all, that is what socialism is really about – isn't it?

RICHARD MONTEITH
Secretary

SERA
Bridge Cottage
Edale Road, Sheffield

Sir, Wilfred Beckerman (NS 18 March) duly restates Groucho Marx's celebrated question as to what posterity has ever done for him. The only difference is that it is extended to two paragraphs and that Mr Beckerman appears to be under the impression that it is a serious argument. Morally, of course, it is nothing of the sort; the subsequent proposition that distinction in one subject does not imply competence in another could hardly have a clearer demonstration.

NICOLAS JACOBS

Jesus College
Oxford

York under Siege

Sir, Edmund Ion's light-hearted but cynical account of the recent occupation by students of the administration building of this university (NS 18 March) painted the familiar picture of hundreds of naïve students being manipulated, puppet like, by a handful of experienced and skilful left-wing extremists. However, as a graduate member of this university, I do not believe that, this time, this was the case. In excess of 800 students attended a meeting at the occupation. Over 700 voted to continue the occupation. This in itself was highly atypical. The majority were of the normally apolitical 'silent majority'. Mr Ions expressed the opinion that these students were 'easy fodder for the (far Left) professionals'.

Apart from underestimating the intelligence of his students, I believe that the expression of such views is potentially damaging to all concerned. The majority of students believe that the Government is mistaken in its intended reductions in planned expenditure. Some have taken part in 'work-ins' and occupations in the hope that, ultimately, this will result in the Government reviewing expenditure. If (when) this does not occur it is not unlikely that further occupations will take place, again supported by a large (normally) silent majority. However, if views such as those expressed by Mr Ions are aired widely, such 'moderates' will feel patronised. They will consequently be less likely to be persuaded by the suggestion that ending an occupation will allow rational discussion in a more reasonable atmosphere (as happened this time). Animosity will grow, debate will become progressively less objective and the occupation will drag on to the detriment of all concerned.

R. K. BOOTH

Department of Biology
University of York

Rhodesia's Compulsory Education

Sir, From the safety of Palo Alto, California, your correspondent Mr L. H. Gann (NS 18 March) criticises my article on Rhodesia (NS 4 March). He chooses not to address himself to the subject under discussion – namely the careless way in which the British media report Rhodesia – but instead pays tribute to the allegedly civilised nature of the white regime in contrast with the forces they are fighting and other African governments.

By way of evidence Mr Gann points out that a number of African nationalist leaders were allowed to take correspondence courses during their period of detention (for up to ten years, incidentally) for the offence of peacefully demanding elementary democracy for their country. Mr Gann is, however, unfortunate in his choice of Edson Sitole as one of those to benefit from the generosity of his jailers. In October 1975 Mr Sitole was kidnapped, apparently by Rhodesian secret police; although positively sighted in military custody several times since his disappearance the authorities continue to deny they are responsible. Mr Sitole has now vanished without trace. I think Mr Gann may agree that all the correspondence courses in the world are unlikely to help Edson Sitole wherever he is now.

CHRIS MULLIN

206 Brixton Road
London SW9

Labour and Europe

Sir, May I reply briefly to my correspondents (Letters 18 March) on Direct Elections? H. B. Hall pulls his head out of the sand long enough to denounce them because the constituencies will be too big. Who says the voice of the people cannot be heard in large constituencies? Tell that to Mrs Gandhi! Then he goes on to say that there is insufficient evidence that the European Parliament (not the 'EEC' as he puts it) can constrain the bureaucrats and the bad guys within the Community. Of course there won't be if we do not have a strong socialist group with a popular mandate behind it pressing for these things, whether it is the outlawing of tax-and-pollution-havens, or hammering the multinational petrol companies on their profits.

But I want the democratic process of accountability to work. Mr Hall doesn't. The longer the Parliament remains a cipher the easier it will be for him to go on with all this pathetic talk of delaying tactics and declarations of independence. It makes us the despair of European socialists. It earns us the contempt

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of Labour voters like Christopher Tallack. Chuck it, Mr Hall. I accepted the referendum. It is time you did the same.

To Mr Kronbergs I can only say that if he read this paper regularly he would know my general objections to PR. This time round I was trying to explain why the list system for European elections, with its caucus overtones, is unattractive to Labour as well as providing a lever for PR at Westminster. I don't rule it out for Strasbourg (and in the present political climate I would be mad to do so) because it is one answer to the problem of size, and because Strasbourg is there to check an executive, not to produce one. This may not be the week to say it, but the perpetual trade-offs which PR would produce at Westminster seem to be a recipe not for fair government but for blurred and ineffective government.

PHILLIP WHITEHEAD

House of Commons

What Filthy Rich?

Sir, Jeremy Bugler argued (NS 11 March) that the data of the Diamond Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth, which shows that the share of top wealth owners has declined since 1960, shows that 'governments have been robbing the stinking rich to give to the filthy rich'. He implies a strange (or perhaps casual) definition of the 'filthy rich'.

As I showed in an article in the *Observer* in early 1975 (using the same basic data as the Diamond Commission and reaching results which are entirely consistent with its own), the share of total wealth has declined sharply for the 'top' 5 per cent of the adult population and increased substantially for the slices of the population below them. But are these slices who have gained the 'filthy rich'? The average total wealth of someone in the second slice of 5 per cent of adults was about £15,000 in 1973, including a house worth £7,000, cash, savings deposits and building society deposits worth £3,000, insurance policies worth £2,000 and household goods worth £1,500. The average total wealth of the next 10 per cent slice of adults was about £10,000, including a £6,000 house, some £1,250 in the bank, etc., some £1,500 of insurance policies and £1,250 of household goods. These are Mr Bugler's 'filthy rich', who have (along with others who are still less well-off) benefited from the massive redistribution of wealth in the last two decades.

I wonder how many of your readers with assets (including their house and after offsetting any debts they owe) totalling around £10-15,000 feel that they can fairly be described as filthily rich?

ALAN DAY

London School of Economics
Houghton Street
London WC2

Compulsory Admissions

Sir, I always find Anne Bennett's articles amusing, if rather trivial. Certainly I have never known her say anything which made me feel that I should write to you before. However, her article 'Birds of a Feather' (NS 11 March) leads me to suspect that she is not only trivial but also that she is dangerously inept at protecting the very people whom, presumably, she is in business to help.

She says: 'she [Miss Doyle] agreed to go to hospital, though we signed the papers anyway as a safeguard.' This kind of action contravenes everything that the Mental Health Act stands for; the most important aspect of which is that an individual should be admitted to a mental hospital in exactly the same way as an individual being admitted to a general hospital, except in the most exceptional circumstances, and almost never when the person has intimated their desire to go.

It is no wonder that the professional social worker is held in such low esteem and that many people look back, nostalgically, to the era of real mental welfare officers and other duly authorised officers. I sincerely hope that Anne Bennett will write another article describing a case in which she carried out the compulsory provisions of the Mental Health Act in such a way as to safeguard the rights of the client.

JACK CLARK

Divisional Director of Social Services
Kent County Council
Aberdeen House
Ramsgate
Kent

Sir, Anne Bennett's consideration for her depressed client shines through clearly in her piece 'Birds of a Feather'. It is all the worse that she apparently feels quite happy to enter the client compulsorily to a mental hospital under a section 29 order, and in an almost flippant way (contrary even to the Act itself) – 'we signed the papers anyway as a safeguard.'

My concern is due to a friend of mine having recently suffered this treatment. After long discussions with medical friends I have been unable to extract a coherent justification for compulsory detentions, which are usually hallmarked by the phrase 'for the patient's own good'. Detentions of this sort are an intrusion upon the liberty of the individual. They are an evil which should be stopped.

I hope you will not dismiss this point of view by admitting its argument while rejecting its practicality. The law can very easily be changed to retain psychiatric detention where it is needed for the protection of the community. Anne Bennett, as an administrator of the Mental Health Act, is like a dictator who takes care to enact good policies. But would she, or the NEW STATESMAN, support dictatorship?

P. KRAFFT

6 Randolph Crescent
London W9

Mobility of Parents

Sir, My attention has been drawn to Peter Wilby's remarks on what I said at the 'Great Debate' in Bradford (NS 11 March). No one in his right mind would say that no one should move to another part of the country at any time whilst any of his children were attending school, nor indeed did I say this. What I said was that prudent and caring parents often try to time their moves so that they do not happen while any of their children are in any of the vital years of schooling, e.g. in the 18 months before sitting O levels or A levels.

I also pointed out that if there were a national 'core curriculum' of named subjects, and even if the 'core' laid down which branch of e.g. science should be studied, there would still be different syllabuses, so that those who moved would still find their new school doing different work from their old school, unless a single national syllabus were laid down in each subject, which each school must take. I cannot believe that any one would want such total and limiting uniformity, who had really thought out its implications.

ARNOLD JENNINGS

Ecclesfield School
Sheffield

Freedom of Children

Sir, Crucifer sympathises with schoolchildren excluded from a delicatessen, (NS 11 March) and quite rightly. But what about the plight of families with children, perpetually excluded from what is frequently the *only* place to buy a meal, especially on a Sunday? I am talking about the pub. People meekly accept this tyranny because of the myth that the law prohibits taking children into pubs, but in fact it is perfectly legal provided there is no bar actually in the room where the children sit. Many pubs have such rooms, but children are seldom allowed in. All right, small children are often a nuisance; but is it right to exclude so many on this ground? I'm tired of eating my sandwiches in the car park.

HILDA BARTON

Bamford Road
Manchester 20

Sir, Many parents have requested that I discourage children from loitering in my shop during school hours, and I try to help, and one of the fears of all shopkeepers is smashing of their windows, a pastime becoming popular.

Hiding behind a silly *alias*, Crucifer incites – because it *is* incitement – young people to vandalism and for what? – the cheapest of cheap popularity. One can imagine his indignation, expressed in oh such burning prose, were anyone to suggest damage to *his* property.

I have sent my copy of the NS to your local police. They can do nothing, of course, but it is as well for them to be reinforced in a conviction they no doubt hold, that those who scream loudest about decencies sap quietly away in the cause of chaos.

A. R. WYTHE

135 Kirkdale
London SE26

Cats Taile in Milk

Sir, Hilary Spurling's tender heart (NS 11 March) need not prevent her from boiling cats-tail in milk in order to concoct a cure for an equally tender back. 'Catstail' is an old, and still current, vernacular name for at least two native British plants – reedmace (*Typha*) and horsetail (*Equisetum*). The latter is almost certainly the specific ingredient in the recipe cited for it is still listed in Martindale's *Extra Pharmacopoeia*, where reference is made to its 'weak diuretic properties'.

W. D. CAMPBELL

Ticknell Corner
The Slade
Charlbury, Oxford

Thank God for England

Sir, All credit to Robert Giddings for his article 'Home Truths From Abroad' (NS 4 March).

I had begun to think that such cultural patriotism and earthy nostalgia were to go the same way as a sense of humour, in becoming incompatible with the holding of socialist views. Happily not.

M. W. BRETHERICK

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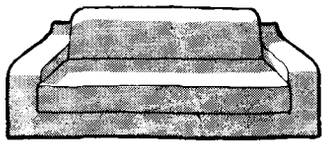
Walton Park
Liverpool 9



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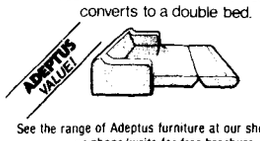

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Malcolm Bradbury

For Whom the Bells Toll

How It Was *by* MARY WELSH HEMINGWAY *Weidenfeld* £6.95

It's sad that no one has yet come along to give us a good general study of that most dangerous of all literary occupations: that of the Writer's Wife. Literary marriages offer, after all, striking and usually well-displayed and documented instances of the general matrimonial institution. They also have their own distinctive features. The task of living with a groaning, excruciated, introverted, egocentric creature is not confined to literary marriages, and is about par for the course; but when these qualities are an essential part of professional competence, and when the consequential relations are frequently made the matter for art, then the affair becomes that much more complex. Writers' Wives, moreover, are *supposed* to understand; a deference is frequently expected. There is a limelight, but it shines on the Writer's Wife only obliquely. Meanwhile a suspicion exists among the attentive readers that if only he had been properly understood, truly pleasured, really aided, the great works would have been greater, the dark agonies spared, the truth of life brought more fully forth.

Writers' Wives (many of whom are, of course, men) thus frequently lead lousy lives. There are many kinds of them: Reverential Writers' Wives, who do try, and come upstairs with the coffee and the admiration, are good with the proofs and the telephone, but often don't *really* understand; Contemptuous Writers' Wives, amazed at the fuss, their task to doubt, dishonour or cuckold the prophet's insatiable vanity. There are Writers' Wives of a sexual splendour so notable it can only be magically connected with the creative powers themselves, and Genteel Writers' Wives (there have been many of these), bowdlerising their spouses' writing and often the spouse as well. There are Competitive Writers' Wives rushing, like Zelda Fitzgerald, to get the material on to the page before the husband does, and Introverted Writers' Wives, who have intelligently shared the consciousness and *angst* of their partners.

But, drawn from all these categories, there has been a yet larger one, that of Writers' Ex-Wives; many writers have been so dependent on the complexities of matrimony that they have tried several of the species. It is natural for us to look for the effect on their work; it is sometimes visible, though one knows writers who claim they can only work between wives. Yet often it is to the wives that the ultimate victory goes. For there is also that remarkable constituency the Writers' Widows, who master the papers, edit the unfinished manuscripts, select the letters and help organise the history, often, of course, making it clear in so doing that the Writer's Wife was more important than you thought. But their day, too, is brief. Beyond them is the supreme and ultimate relation of all, for which all marriages are but pale substitutes. This is the relation between the Writer and the Writer's Biographer And True Critic, for whom it has really all been done, and who must always be notionally there to explain how it really was.

How was it? Mary Welsh's book offers, in the case of Hemingway, to tell us. It must be said that it doesn't really. For Mary Welsh was a nice Writer's Wife, a modest and pleasantly understanding person, with a temper, and an indignation, and a capacity to see the flaws in the master, as who could not; and an unassertive style that transfers on to the page as a kind of evasion. She was, of course, Ernest Hemingway's fourth, final, and longest wife, the spouse of the mature years of fame, physical deterioration, deepening depression and self-destruction, the widow of his suicide. He, incidentally, was her third husband, though this fact is only faintly visible in the book, a text not good on intimacies. Admittedly the first marriage was remarkably temporary, and the second, to the Australian journalist Noel Monks, was pushed quickly into disarray and lack of contact by the bustle and travel of the wartime years, when both were war correspondents on different fronts. But it is part of the tone of this book that the real matter of relationships – the psychic, moral and sexual funds that go into them – is not displayed, and this is as true of the relationship with Hemingway as of the rest. Whether intentionally evasive or not, the tactics are anecdotal. And if the early life is largely displaced off into essays on other things – My Love of Nature, How Beaverbrook Nearly Lured Me Down the Nile and Asked Me to Be His Friend, and What I Did and Wore When I Reported the Late Hostilities – then the reader's natural desire to have, in that larger part of the book that deals with the Hemingway carnage, an intimate portrait of a man who tore himself to pieces in many ways, including through his sexual relationships and marriages, is very considerably thwarted.

Moreover, since most of the anecdotes, the trips, the game-counts, have been substantially recorded already, by various biographers, but especially by Carlos Baker, there is not a lot that will be added by this book – except, and it is important, an increased sense of mystery. It was evidently a marriage of great strain, eased by Mary's apparent goodwill and the common similarities of background they shared. She came from a lakeland Minnesota background not unlike Hemingway's own; she trained as a journalist in the States and then, in the 1930s, was drawn to Europe, as Hemingway had earlier been, where she worked for Beaverbrook's *Daily Express*; when the war started, she shifted to *Time* magazine and became an influential war correspondent. It was a job that meant constant oscillations to fronts and back to base camp in the London Dorchester and the Paris Ritz, and it was in these settings that the courtship with Hemingway was largely conducted. His style, as in all matters, was territorial; it was Hemingway's way to take possession of landscapes, settings, and the right hotels, claiming them as right, and he attempted much the same with Mary Welsh. The unease in the relationship is patent, and the quarrels were considerable; these are frankly recorded, the most notable case being that when Hemingway distinguished himself at the Ritz by placing a photograph of Monks and Mary in a toilet bowl, and then shooting up the entire affair.

Hemingway seems to have been concerned to integrate Mary into a world he had already mastered and claimed, and she is slow to acquiesce. It is striking that just before they were married Hemingway introduced her to her first accident, in Cuba, on the road to the airport, when he crashed the car and her face was so badly scarred it required plastic surgery. From this point forward, she seems largely to have acquiesced in a world that is, from outside view, strikingly concerned with expressing an inner violence and despair. In all this, Mary, who claims to have vowed as a child not to kill anything, participated, again with an obvious element of doubt and anxiety. The sporting and military *ménage* also included its cohort of female admirers, but again the specific anxieties on this score are only very lightly alluded to. A letter threatening to leave Hemingway is produced, but the consequences are blurred, and the anecdotal mode resumes. If Mary Welsh is capable of forming and expressing her thoughts about the ultimate solitariness of those inside the marital institution, she is not capable of bringing them to the level of analysis.

So it is not quite how it was; and in one obvious sense Mary Welsh Hemingway did not learn the lesson of the master. It was Hemingway's view, and perhaps his illusion, that there was a true sentence, an accurate line in language that penetrated the essence of an experience. This is the Hemingway accuracy proposition, and this is one reason why many of the books that surround him have been concerned with the accuracy of the fact and the emotion. The writing and the rewriting of the record has thus been crucial; who was right about Fitzgerald, for example: Gertrude Stein or Hemingway? Harold Loeb once wrote a book called *The Way It Was*, a resistance to his being cast as Robert Cohn in *The Sun Also Rises*. But the Hemingway-like title of Mary Welsh's book does not disguise the fact that her view of a discourse was learned more from Beaverbrook and *Time* than from Hemingway himself. One puts it down wondering whether writers' wives can say how it was, whether the knowledge we have of others stays knowledge when we turn it into the cast of prose we have been trained in. But also, thinking about this evidently pleasant and good woman, whether they ought even to try.

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Derek Mahon

The Existential Lyric

Collected Poems in English and French by SAMUEL BECKETT *John Calder* £4.50

Beckett's work in verse is an uncertain quantity in more ways than one. The present volume, more than twice the length of *Poems in English* (1961), has a definitive air, yet it doesn't contain the totality of Beckett's published verse, some of which is still hidden away in defunct magazines and obscure editions against the day when all will be revealed. However, we may take it that what we have here is all that the author 'wishes to preserve' for the moment. The book is in three parts. Part I, 'Poems in English', adds six poems to those already available. Part II, 'Poems in French', some of them with facing English translations by the author, adds 15 poems to the four French poems previously collected; and Part III brings together a number of translations, with facing originals, of texts by various French poets – Rimbaud's *'Le Bateau Ivre'*, Apollinaire's *'Zone'*, poems by Paul Eluard, and eight maxims by Sébastien Chamfort. These last are dismal stuff, feebly anticipating the more 'shocking' pronouncements of Baudelaire's *Journaux Intimes: 'Que le coeur de l'homme est creux et plein d'ordure.'* Well, yes and no. And Beckett's whimsical couplets do nothing to restore confidence.

But the Eluard poems are competently done; the Apollinaire is marvellously lively and inventive; and the Rimbaud, pretty freely translated, rises on occasion to something rather more than a translation. A publisher's note explains why *Drunken Boat* hasn't been available until now, and gives its history. In 1932 the editor of the Paris-based *This Quarter* expressed an interest in publishing an English translation of Rimbaud's poem; and Beckett, hard up as he then frequently was, took on the job as a paid commission: he received 700 francs. It never appeared, and all copies were presumed lost until, last year, a typescript miraculously turned up, folded into a friend's copy of the *The Oxford Book of French Verse*. Beckett's version, as I said, is pretty free, and no attempt is made to reproduce the simple rhyme scheme of the original; but, like Pound's *Cathay* or Campbell's *Poems of St John of the Cross*, it will surely be one of those translations to which monoglot readers constantly return, less for an exact rendering than for an imaginative recreation of the original. One doesn't associate Beckett with the kind of richly textured language to be found in, say, Hart Crane's 'Voyages', yet here it is:

> I have dreamt the green night's drifts
> of dazzled snow,
> The slow climb of kisses to the eyes of
> the seas,
> The circulation of unheard-of saps
> And the yellow-blue alarum of
> phosphors singing.

The blurb for *Poems in English* claimed that 'with this collection Beckett takes his rightful place in the mainstream of English poetry'. Wisely, the claim is not repeated; for he does nothing of the sort. He could hardly be further removed from the mainstream of English poetry, if by that mainstream we mean something that flows from Wordsworth through Hardy to Larkin. Beckett isn't interested in conversational reality, or in language as an instrument of representation. Indeed, so 'un-English' is his poetry that many are reluctant to grant it the status of poetry at all: one looks in vain for work by Beckett in most anthologies of modern verse. This is a pity, for a closer look at his intentions and procedures, and an understanding of his failures, might help to extend the possibilities of English poetry, the more so since his work owes its beginnings to a quite different set of premises from that to which the English poet is accustomed. (The same was true of Eliot, of course.) In early articles and reviews Beckett spoke of a rupture, and of poetry as the only way out of 'the tongue-tied profanity'. This rupture isn't the social and cultural phenomenon adumbrated by poets like Roy Fuller and Philip Larkin, but rather a metaphysical disjunction between 'subject' and 'object', between the perceiving sensibility and everything external to it, from the burnt match to the furthest star. And the tongue-tied profanity has less to do with economic conditions than with, in Pascal's phrase, *'la misère de l'homme sans Dieu'*. Beckett himself, writing about the Irish poet Thomas MacGreevy, coined the phrase 'the existential lyric', and his own best poems come under this heading.

Most readers probably find the early poems in English hardest to take. 'Whoroscope' and the 'Enueg', 'Sanies' and 'Serena' poems have historical interest, but little intrinsic quality. Also, there's a displeasing undergraduate cleverness about them, despite the occasional strong line, which makes one wonder why Beckett continues to collect them. The exceptions are shorter pieces like 'The Vulture', 'Alba', 'Da Tagte Es' and 'Echo's Bones'; although it's not until 'Saint-Lô', dated 1946, that we find something entirely coherent and luminous. The Vire is a river in France:

> Vire will wind in other shadows
> unborn through the bright ways tremble
> and the old mind ghost-forsaken
> sink into its havoc

But just as the fiction matured with the switch to French, so too his most successful efforts in verse, some of them so minimalist as to be scarcely there at all, are those first written in that language – 'Dieppe', *'je voudrais que mon amour meure'* (although I wish he would make up his mind about the English rendering of the last line) and *'vive morte ma seule saison'*, which appears here for the first time, without an English translation:

> *Vive morte ma seule saison*
> *lis blancs chrysanthèmes*
> *nids vifs abandonnés*
> *boues des feuilles d'avril*
> *beaux jours gris de givre*

My own version of this is beside me, but I won't be so foolhardy as to offer it here.

Interestingly, there are several poems in

ANTHONY BURGESS

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Hutchinson

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this collection of very recent date, the latest belonging to 1976; and these new poems are in English. Beckett once gave as his reason for switching to French a desire to 'stop writing poetry' – to escape, that is, from the associations imposed by his mother tongue. Is the poetry creeping back?

Julian Symons

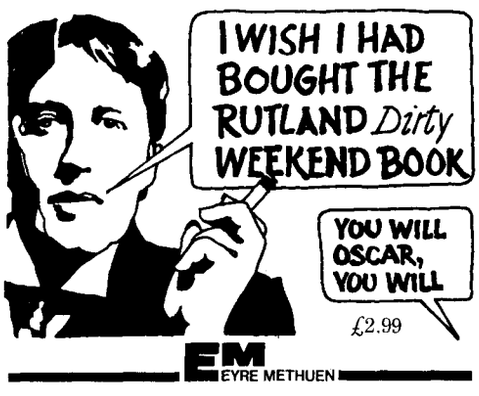
I'm All Right

Instead of the Trees by J. B. PRIESTLEY
Heinemann £3.50

What's up, Jack?

I'm glad you asked, though as a blunt Yorkshireman still writing far too much for my own good (p.25) I'd have told you anyway. This country's finished, I can tell you that. We, the people of England, are the victims of fanatical ideologists (p.35) who are trying to tax us out of existence, and they've managed to ruin Britain in five years (p.2). You want some examples? Take London. Every decade it gets different and worse, noisy, over-crowded, expensive – my favourite restaurants have priced themselves clean out of Jack's market (p.21). Take the Isle of Wight, where I used to live. You know what's happened there? It's becoming too popular – they tell me (I haven't been back) that it's been *developed*. And, I ask you, for what? (p.142). Other countries are as bad. Went to a resort in Poland. Rubbishy place, too many people, wanted to paint, could hardly see the lake for the visitors. Out of temper, did an angry gouache, one of my better jobs, much admired (p.11).

Take food, take the theatre, take travel. We've got the lowest standards of food and service in Western Europe, mess, squalor and muck everywhere (p.82). I used to love the theatre, way back in the Thirties you could get any actor you wanted, now there's one playing at the Royal Shakespeare, another at the National, and who's paying the bill? Why, the taxpayer, me, Jack (p.78). And travel. Long ago – look at the old prints – the stagecoaches used to leave their inns with trumpets, bugles, horns sounding. But shall I tell you what a modern airport's like? Nobody laughs, nobody even smiles, we might be on the way to a concentration camp (p.125). You aren't a man and a brother any more. Mind you, on a flight of any length I always travel first class. It's not for the smoked salmon and champagne, just comfort (p.123).



Something went wrong about 1910. Art lost its popularity then (p.140), people were better (p.62). Anything I've enjoyed lately? Yes, New Zealand was beautiful, and it wasn't crowded. Then you know what I heard some people saying in Ceylon? 'Wish the British were back,' they muttered (p.8). Mind you, they weren't middle-class intellectuals. And – now I'll surprise you – Monte Carlo out of season wasn't so bad either. What we really need are some other independent principalities like it, where all squalid messes are abolished and you can get back to 1910 (p.13). There's no chance, of course. Today's bad, and tomorrow will be worse (p.69).

These are almost all Priestley words, from this collection of loosely-linked autobiographical fragments. Their crusted or sentimental Toryism hardly needs comment, yet Mr Priestley might truly say indignantly that he is not a Tory all the time. He is Mr Have It Both Ways, a cheerful old pessimist who expects you to see the twinkle in his lugubrious saurian eye. He presents himself as a grumbler, a hopeless companion on holiday, ungracious when he's given presents, a man who glooms around at weddings. Does he mean it, does he mean you to believe it? Not he. Why, in the next paragraph he's calling himself 'mocking yet compassionate', and the picture produced in this book is of a whimsical, lovable old codger. True enough, I daresay, but since the old codger is never quite serious we can't take him seriously either. When Orwell said that if you thought of the future you should think of a boot stamping on a human face forever, he meant it. When Mr Priestley says tomorrow will be worse, it's only Grandad sounding off.

A failure of imagination is the consistent defect of this book, an inability to see that it is tactless to imply that you are being taxed out of existence in one breath and then to mention that you travel first class in the next, and that it is deeply unfeeling to make comparisons between an airport (which for many less lucky than Mr Priestley symbolises joy and liberation) and a concentration camp. Perhaps such a failure goes along naturally with the fact that he has persistently misconceived the nature of his talent. He has – and in his eighties admirably retains – as much energy as a hydro-electric plant, a sense of social ironies, a fine feeling for broad comedy. His most successful works are those which approach their subjects through social realism, *Eden End* and *An Inspector Calls* among the plays (both are set in 1912), *Angel Pavement* among the novels. These are triumphs of their kind. What he does not have is a very original or subtle mind. The Time plays are awful examples of what may happen when a social realist takes a long swig of space-time philosophy.

As a social influence he was at his peak a kind of Everyman, an eloquent spokesman for a great mass of decent liberal opinion during the Thirties and Forties. Now he is increasingly restless in a time of easy prosperity for the young and total disrespect for attitudes which he has always taken for granted as desirable. It is splendid that in his eighties he should be interested in so many things, sad that the interest should be manifested here in a silly and trivial book.

Richard Cork

Model Patient

From Naked To Nude: Life Drawing in the Twentieth Century by GEORG EISLER
Thames & Hudson £2.95

The photograph reproduced on the back cover of *From Naked To Nude* shows what its caption describes as 'the author at work'. Not writing his book, but drawing from a model. For Georg Eisler is an artist, and at first glance we accept the record of his activity provided by the photographer as entirely natural, appropriate, even dignified. After all, what could be more hallowed than the silent interaction between the artist, silhouetted in the foreground as he moves his pencil across the sheet on his knee, and the naked woman who sits posing for him in the middle distance?

But if we look again, and refuse to accept the inevitability of this relationship, the photograph becomes a disturbing testament to the whole set of questionable attitudes. I have no way of telling whether the woman Eisler surveys is his wife, mistress, daughter or simply a hired model. It is clear, however, that she is bored by her task and slumps, head propped long-sufferingly on hand, in the studio chair. It is also clear that her very nakedness has encouraged her to disengage mentally and become little more than the body which Eisler is trying to define on paper. The distance separating observer from observed is therefore more than a matter of walking across the room, although the wide angle of the camera lens does stress the model's peculiar isolation. For the artist is active, alert, and clothed, a master who would never dream of undressing in order to pose for a woman. Whereas the model is passive, drowsy, and unclothed, a servant who would never dream of doubting the propriety of her role. Eisler – whose name we know – sketches on in the seclusion of his Viennese studio, just as his counterparts have done for hundreds of years; while the woman – whose name we do not know – accepts her equally time-honoured subservience as an object fit only to be scrutinised.

I may, of course, be guilty of misinterpreting this relationship altogether: photographs have a notorious ability to distort in the name of veracity. But the fact remains that the principal thrust of Eisler's book, in its brief text as well as its illustrations, is aimed at reinforcing the tradition of drawing from the life, and that includes the artist/model convention with all its blatant male-chauvinist associations. His introduction does, admittedly, show an awareness of how this convention has changed, by tracing its progression from the statutory life-class

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in the academy, through the 19th-century Bohemian infatuation with the model as lover, to many of its more disparate and open-ended manifestations today. But there is no great difference between Eisler's disapproving description of the old 'clinically impersonal' life-class, where 'the model takes up a pose determined by the teacher and remains still in the neutral surroundings of a large room', and the ethos of the photograph I have already discussed. Both of them are equally vulnerable to the satirical attack mounted by Klee in his 1906 pencil study of a nude, holding a flower almost as etiolated as her own limbs, who adopts an exaggerated classical stance for the students swaying in feverish motion around her. Eisler reproduces this drawing in his book, but apart from acknowledging that it possesses Klee's 'wry humour', he does not appear to appreciate that its irreverence undermines everything the artist upholds when he sketches from life.

Unabashed, Eisler uses the pencil study which he executed during the session documented in the photograph as an exemplar of life drawing, and devotes the greater part of his introduction to a practical run-through of the various media available, the best way to pose a model and, finally, how to draw from the nude. I have always been deeply suspicious of manuals which purport to make the reader into an adept artist, as if drawing, painting or any other art practice could somehow be learned with the aid of a few handy tips. And when Eisler issues maxims like 'good lighting moulds the body and gives us more to draw; lack of it can make the best pose flat and insipid', we only have to turn to the book's two Indian-ink drawings by Matisse to prove that exhilarating nude studies need not rely on internal shading of any kind. As for Eisler's insistence that 'whatever we wish to express through our drawing . . . without the chair or base to support the body, the drawing will not make sense', its authority is confounded by many of the studies he selects as illustrations. Neither of Rodin's rapid pencil drawings, which respectively catch a seated and reclining nude in the very slipstream of their own restless energy, needs to specify its base. Moreover, it could be claimed that the inclusion of a chair or bed would detract from the self-contained impact, not only of Rodin's women, but also of Grosz's nude with her plaintively sagging buttocks and Giacometti's early study of a female back, divided into planes with a systematic dispassion far removed from the attenuated suffering of his mature work.

There would be scant need to worry about Eisler's dicta were it not for their implicit perpetuation of the old sexist function of the nude in art. Without deploring the imbalance, Eisler notes in passing that the majority of artists and collectors of art have been men; and, sure enough, none of the 79 reproductions in his book is by a woman. As a consequence, the models are female in all but a few cases. Leaning back on couches, perched on stools, kneeling on beds, stepping into tubs and sprawling on turkey rugs, this posturing parade of bare feminine flesh constitutes a nightmarish indictment of women's social role even in the late 20th century. By the end of the illustrations section, the poor models have been made to strut in a rubber catsuit (Allen Jones); hang upside down with legs apart while electric fans cool an exposed vagina (Oldenburg); press their blue-painted bodies against a canvas (Klein): and stand erect in an exotic combination of hard, tight underwear and feathered Indian head-dress (Lindner).

The image of woman as a helpless pawn in a masculine fantasy-world is quite overwhelming, and scarcely offset by the occasional drawing which opts instead for a more compassionate view: Neizvestny's rhetorical symbol of endurance, for instance, her right hand clutching her left shoulder for sustaining comfort, the other hand plunged firmly between Michelangelesque thighs as if to protect her sex from unwelcome assault. Studies like this, and Moore's lumbering yet oddly tender drawing of a woman whose whole being seems to have drained from her vacant face and flowed into a gigantic pair of earth-mother legs, prove that some male artists at least are not totally in thrall to the prevailing equation of drawing with fucking. But on the whole, attitudes do not seem to have changed greatly during the three-and-a-half centuries since Elizabethan poets (all men, of course) delighted in referring to the pencil as a phallus.

There are, certainly, a couple of drawings by the overrated Hockney in this collection, and they seem entirely frank about their infatuation with the male nude. The standing figure of *Bob*, naked except for a medallion, jock-strap and bootees, is perhaps the most cow-like embodiment of the nude as sacrificial sex-offering to be found in the book. None of the other men who drew the handful of males represented here, however, is sexually involved with his subject at all. They are, in fact, unlovely specimens, especially Leonard Baskin's *Watching Man* who stands, flabby and unshaven, like a pathetic voyeur waiting for a glimpse of the abandoned ladies on the other pages. He looks as if he would agree with Eisler's remark that 'a very pretty girl with perfect shapes can stimulate any feeling but the one of wishing to draw or paint her'.

The comment is honest enough, and cannot in all fairness be castigated for its sex-object view of women. Yet there is a crucial difference between finding females attractive and prolonging the disgracefully prejudiced orthodoxy which has considered for too long that women are more suited for modelling than for making art. Linda Nochlin points out, in her excellent contribution to *Art and Sexual Politics*, that it was

> all right for a ('low,' of course) woman to reveal herself naked-as-an-object for a group of men but forbidden that a woman participate in the active study and recording of naked-as-an-object men *or* women.

Eisler would surely not concur with the attitude Nochlin so damningly analyses; but his total exclusion of women artists, and willingness to put forward the male artist/female model scenario as a natural law to be upheld and emulated, cannot be viewed as anything other than a retrograde step. By 'nude' Western culture still means 'woman' – a man always has to be described as a '*male* nude' – and it is high time artists stopped conniving at such discriminative practices, in their studios as well as in the books they write.

J. G. Ballard

Zap Code

Approaching Oblivion by HARLAN ELLISON *Millington* £3.50
Shadrach in the Furnace by ROBERT SILVERBERG *Gollancz* £3.80
Medusa's Children by BOB SHAW *Gollancz* £4.20

Exuberance, an attractive and abundant quality in science fiction, is comparatively rare among its writers, as anyone attending an sf convention soon notices. For some reason there is a marked contrast between the personal style of the genre's fans, a happy, beer-swilling, hotel-wrecking contingent – in short, the charge of the light ale brigade – and that of the writers themselves, for the most part shy and rather Thurberish figures with intimidating wives, who are plainly terrified by the silence of those infinite spaces. I can only guess that the task of sustaining the classical sf image of a universe infinitely colonised throughout time and space demands a degree of concentration that is deeply repressive.

The most notable exception among contemporary writers of sf is Harlan Ellison, an aggressive and restless extrovert who conducts his life at a shout and his fiction at a scream. Teenage gang-leader turned

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Hollywood screen-writer, polemicist and unarmed combat specialist (he once unnerved me in the elevator of a Rio hotel by offering to demonstrate how to kill a man in the three seconds between floors), Ellison is one of the most interesting and talented sf writers to appear since Ray Bradbury. Ten years ago he published the first of his remarkable series *Dangerous Visions*, collections of specially commissioned stories whose authors were urged to capitalise on every taboo or deviant notion inside their heads, and which made a complete break with the already fossilised conventions of American sf. Out went outer space and the far future, in came inner space and the world of Zap Comics and biomorphic fantasies inspired by William Burroughs.

Approaching Oblivion, Ellison's latest short story collection, has all the visceral and paranoid obsessions that run through the anthologies. In 'Knox', an ultra-fascist America has tortured and murdered every conceivable enemy and is forced to turn inwards to find its last victim, destroying itself with the reductive logic of a lunatic abattoir. In 'Cold Friend' a terminal cancer patient emerges cured from his cryogenic tomb to find that it is now his mind that is diseased. However lurid, the stories have a relentless imaginative drive, suggesting that Ellison may be the first of a new kind of sf writer, completely uninterested in science but attracted to the medium by the ample opportunities which New Wave sf offers for exploiting the most sensational emotional mixes.

Robert Silverberg's new novel is an elaborate medico-political thriller that describes what must be the ultimate in the patient/doctor relationship. Forty years in the future, a health-obsessed dictator is linked to his personal physician by a network of electronic implants that relay the minutest details of bodily function. Determined to survive at all costs, the dictator submits to extensive organ transplant surgery, awaiting the time when some unfortunate donor can be found who will supply the ultimate transplant – his entire body – into which the electrical patterns of the dictator's brain and nervous system can be passed. Unfortunately, the suitable donor dies, and the doctor himself is then selected as the victim, with the grisly prospect of becoming both his patient and his patient's disease. Ingenious and literate, the novel might well have given one or two interesting ideas to Howard Hughes in his last years.

A large part of Bob Shaw's *Medusa's Children* takes place under water, and without in any way poking fun at the book I wish it could be read there. A genuinely dream-like calm pervades this story of an undersea clan living in a cluster of nets and sunken ships near the ocean floor. The sense of sun-filled water all around, the absence of movement and the suspension of time create a trance-like atmosphere in which the events of the narrative drift by like sleeping fish. The story unfolds as quietly as the changing currents and chemistry of the sea which first alert these undersea dwellers to the transformation of their world and to the possible existence of some immense oceanic being, first feared as an enemy, but of which they themselves may be part. Traditional sf, but expertly done.

Charles Wheeler

Plead Honesty

Blind Ambition: The White House Years by JOHN DEAN *Simon & Schuster* £4.95

Who killed the Nixon presidency? Mainly, The Man himself. He was ably assisted by John Dean, the White House counsel who transfixed millions of television viewers by accusing his master of complicity in the Watergate cover-up. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein helped too, of course: their reports created the climate on Capitol Hill for the Senate hearings that provided Dean with a platform. Less highly publicised, but crucial, was the role of Judge John Sirica; by refusing to treat the Watergate case as a mere burglary, and by handing down swingeing sentences, he persuaded the burglars to talk – and cracked the case. But it was Dean who picked up the scent that led to the tapes that brought down Nixon.

Mr Dean has often testified in court and his published confessions take the reader down a well-worn road. But he is the first member of Nixon's inner circle to tell his story and he is commendably candid about his motives and role. What made Dean tick was ambition. Unlike most White House aides, he was apolitical, more interested in promotion than power. His objective was the good life: money, girls, friends in high places. At 31, as a junior lawyer at the Justice Department and a protégé of the Attorney-General, John Mitchell, he was recruited by Bob Haldeman, White House Chief of Staff, and made Counsel to the President. The post proved disappointing – legal chores, few perks, no entry to the Oval Office – and after 18 months Dean began looking for another job, preferably abroad and paying $100,000 a year in recognition of his contacts and experience in the Government. But Haldeman was displeased and he agreed to stay on until after the 1972 election.

What made Dean's White House career was Watergate. His part in the events that preceded the 17 June burglary had been insignificant. But within 48 hours of the break-in, the President's chief domestic adviser, John Ehrlichman, was directing the cover-up and Dean, as staff lawyer, became his manager. In a restrained but vivid chapter Dean describes how he beavered away in the common interest, shredding papers, receiving other aides' hot campaign money, aligning conflicting stories, coaching witnesses. At first, as the President's demoralised assistants shovelled the guilt out of their offices and struggled to keep two steps ahead of the prosecutors and the press, there was near panic. But, as the election approached, it subsided: the press seemed reluctant to challenge a President whose stock in the opinion polls was well ahead of his rival and rising. As for the voters, few seemed to care about Watergate.

His devotion to duty at this stage of the cover-up brought Dean to the edge of Nixon's inner circle. When rivalry between Ehrlichman and Mitchell, who detested each other, threatened to split the White House and the Re-election Committee, CREEP, into hostile pitched camps, Dean acted as go-between. His biggest success was at the Justice Department, where the new FBI chief, Patrick Gray, kept Dean informed of what his agents were up to while Henry Peterson, Head of the Criminal Division, 'contained' the investigation by keeping a close watch on the government prosecutor, Earl Silbert. Peterson to Dean: 'Earl knows he's investigating a break-in. He knows better than to wander off beyond his authority into other things.'

Dean is uniquely qualified to write about this part of the cover-up: it absorbed most of his waking hours and he was in it up to his waist. His account of it – and the Nixon tapes support his story – may suggest to some that the collaboration of these senior civil servants in such a widespread conspiracy to obstruct justice was the most baneful aspect of the entire Watergate affair. Curiously, it seems never to have been treated as such by the Congress, the media or the courts.

Dean himself admits to an occasional twinge of conscience, but he appears to have been blinded by elation at the initial success of the cover-up. He describes how he was momentarily shaken by the President's first blatant lie on television – Dean, so Nixon asserted, had carried out a full investigation of Watergate that exonerated every serving member of the White House staff. But he soon recovered: he enjoyed being mentioned by name in a speech to the nation, and besides, the deception might work.

Later, after the election, Dean developed doubts. It dawned on him that he had crossed the line between counsel and co-conspirator. Haldeman and Ehrlichman, too busy with affairs of State to concern themselves with sordid detail, had assigned to Dean the task of supervising the payment of hush money to Howard Hunt and his band of Cuban burglars, all seven of whom had engaged fashionable lawyers and had begotten many children. Finding the money proved difficult. Though the campaign coffers at CREEP were brimming over with cash, investigators had sealed the locks. Undaunted, Dean assembled a small army of collectors, who reluctantly combed the darkest corners of the Union for money for a cause whose nature they couldn't reveal. The takings were minimal and Robert Mardian, a much put-upon associate of John Mitchell's, who was subsequently jailed for his pains, explained why. 'Jesus,' he told Dean,

> I don't know what to say to people. I can't tell them we need some campaign money. That won't work. We just won the goddam election, and the papers are full of stories about how much money we have left over. Maury Stans gave me the name of some contact down in Florida who's supposed to be the key to a couple of hundred thousand dollars in cash. I think it's Arab oil money that Maury won't touch, I don't want to touch it either. The last thing we need is for some crazy Arab to have us by the balls and threaten to sing if the President doesn't bomb Jerusalem. It'd be worse than being blackmailed by Hunt.

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It now occurred to Dean that the cover-up might have to continue for ever. At least a dozen White House officials were relying on one another to commit harmonious perjury; and all of them knew that one discordant note – or worse, a defection – might involve them all in obstruction of justice charges. Dean doesn't gloss over the fact that he was the first to defect – or to pretend that honesty, rather than fear, was his motive. The excuse he gives is a credible one: he was under pressure from Nixon to write a report for publication in which he, Dean, would declare that his own full investigation of Watergate had exonerated every member of the White House staff. Dean suspected that he was being set up for a sacrifice, that if the dam began to break the President would explain that he'd been lied to by his counsel.

So Dean found himself a lawyer, struck a bargain with the prosecutors and was treated, as he'd hoped to be, as a witness and not a defendant. Soon he was telling all he knew. He got his first reward when his testimony before the Senate Committee was believed. He was rewarded again when Judge Sirica reduced his sentence from one to four years' imprisonment to time served – three months. As for his book, Dean doesn't claim that he is trying to atone for his sinful services to Richard Nixon. In a throwaway line, he remarks that he owes his lawyer $200,000 in fees.

Paddy Beesley

Be Bad

Up She Rises by DAVID GARNETT *Macmillan* £3.95
Bakunin: An Invention by HORST BIENEK translated by Ralph R. Read *Gollancz* £3.95
The Demon by HUBERT SELBY *Marion Boyars* £4.95
The Passion of New Eve by ANGELA CARTER *Gollancz* £3.95

T. H. White once complained to David Garnett about the lack of malice in his autobiography: 'Can't you manage to think up some unpleasant characters, and make one or two ruthless attacks on them? You must not like everybody.' Though Garnett is quite capable of tart riposte ('Your experience', he wrote to White, 'with one human and two canine bitches does not lead me to treat your views seriously'), there is a fair and rare measure of detached, intelligent geniality about his writing. Clementina Carey, the heroine of *Up She Rises*, has a great deal of gutsy niceness, flexibility, and a stoical, relativistic attitude to life. Plausibly, she turns out to be based on Garnett's own great-grandmother, a self-educated crofter's daughter who emerges into late-Georgian prosperity as the wife of a steam-packet skipper.

Ambition and self-discipline triumph over misfortune and malice, at times too easily for fiction's good: when Clementina pluckily walks from Scotland to Portsmouth, the novel seems to invite comparison with picaresque tramping-fiction – except that most people she runs into are surprisingly helpful. This is largely true of the narrative as a whole: the further the characters get from their humble origins, the more the reader of novels waits, vainly, for them to be chopped by a divine rabbit-punch. In effect, they gradually grow out of being characters in fiction, and turn into admirable examples from Smiles's *Self-Help*. Their good fortune makes them less real in one context and more so in another. Mr Garnett, of course, has the perfect answer to charges of scandalous optimism levelled at his agreeable and well-paced tale: it all really happened.

So too, in a different way, did Horst Bienek's investigation (though he prefers to call it an 'invention') of Bakunin. Its determination to level stridently with the reader at every turn reminds one most of the Pompidou Centre: all the lines of construction, all the cables and conduits bringing essential supplies, are deliberately displayed and painted vivid colours. Nothing is hidden, nothing extenuated: we follow the author as he visits Neuchâtel to research into the great anarchist writer, as he interviews people who fail to remember anything, writes chivvying notes to himself, makes lists of further reading, examines his own motives, quotes from Bakunin and Turgenev's *Rudin*, then loses interest and sends his books back to the library. There is some play between the anarchist's vigour and idealism and the present writer's lassitude, but little else within the knowing and self-conscious shell of the form. A bookseller who is interviewed remarks at one point that the artist who really wants something new must be an anarchist; and it's more than possible that Bienek, by writing a book about not being able to write a book, is trying to create the first example of anarchist fiction. He certainly knows how to lob a bomb at the powers of concentration.

Hubert Selby's novel begins with an unnerving lack of gore and vileness. Harry White is a promising, unpushy junior executive in a corporation whose business we are fussily kept ignorant of; he is a nearly ideal son, an amateur softball player, and a lunchtime philanderer who laughs married women into bed. A version of Heller's *Something Happened*, one suspects, with splashes of big-city neurosis from Harry, and jokey, sardonic observation of downtown New York from Hubert. But Harry's sexual urges turn out something special – obsessive, alienating and ultimately destroying. The more Harry tries to suppress them by following social norms – marriage, hard work, career success – the more they reassert themselves with shaming power: as his social bracket rises, so does his compulsion to trawl the lower depths. His marriage founders, and even his life-enhancing pot plants screw up and turn brown. Selbian black power asserts itself, Harry turns to impulsive theft, and finally murder in a welter of extreme, free-associating prose. For some, Selby is a powerfully moral writer, though it's often hard to see how, except in the shaky 'emetic' sense of Judge Woolsey's famous *Ulysses* ruling. Here, his descriptions of psychic collapse and its violent consequences are unsparingly realistic, and clearly he doesn't advocate the behaviour he describes, any more than Peckinpah does; but this scarcely makes him morally active.

The New York of Angela Carter's latest fantasy is more mythic, futuristic and extreme. A horror city of pillage and rape, where the Blacks have burnt Grand Central Station and the women are in revolt, it is the jumping-off point for an English academic's transcontinental Marvel-comic trek through a landscape of symbols and significances. We get the symbols we deserve, as Miss Carter remarks in the opening chapter; and English Evelyn, hitherto content with a Garbo-like screen goddess as his main symbol of womanhood, discovers in a disintegrating America nastier and more threatening images which are, one assumes, mythic projections of contemporary sexual attitudes. Mama, castratrix of the phallocentric universe, who resexes Evelyn and prepares to impregnate him with his own seed; Zero, a Mansonish, woman-hating poet who rapes the new Eve(lyn); a gang of puritanical West Coast kids, toughly cleaning things up for God; and the movie-star herself, Tristessa, revealed as a man in drag, with whom Eve is forcibly mated (work that one out). If it all sounds jagged and cluttered in summary, then this is a good summary. Miss Carter leaves all plot on the escapes-and-captures level, shuns dialogue, and despite snatches of sharp phrasing, is prone to court silliness: what is offered as a harsh contemporary imagination comes across too often as exuberant zaniness.

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Blind Date *King's Head*
Vampire *Bush*

People are always mis-spelling Alan Ayckbourn's name with an 'e' at the end, and I think I know why. They are confusing him with the small town that straggles beside the A320 between Chertsey and Woking in the Surrey gin-belt. Ayckbourne, as it's called, is the sort of place that seems more desirable to estate agents than to its population of housewives, commuting executives and saloon-bar loudmouths, most of whom find happiness hard to sustain. The older houses have leaking roofs and inadequate Agas. The newer ones are packed with do-it-yourself kits and did-it-myself tat, apt to disintegrate when touched. Parties are frequently thrown by the younger set, but they invariably end in disaster, owing to the dicky marriages and wandering eyes of some of the guests. Love rarely flourishes in Ayckbourne, and sex, as often as not, is something inflicted by boorish men on their compliant but abstracted wives. Even friendship is a pretty unreliable commodity, given the bottomless egoism of some of those offering it. Not to shilly-shally further, life in Ayckbourne is a long, losing tussle with the environment, other people and one's own built-in inadequacies: *'desperandum lente'* is the motto carved beneath the civic arms, which consist of two crossed golf-clubs on a Black and Decker rampant.

Shift the odd emphasis, and the foregoing evidence could have been extracted from any of several sociological surveys to have been prepared by Ayckbourn about Ayckbourne. In fact, it's based on *Bedroom Farce*, like *Absent Friends* a case-study of maddening, ungetriddable-of visitors and hostly endurance driven to its screeching limits. Susannah and Trevor take their brawling marriage and personal dolour to anyone who will, or even won't, listen to them. Having successfully disrupted a housewarming thrown by Kate and Malcolm, they're promptly off into the darkness, night-owls in search of new prey: she to her in-laws, Ernest and Delia, a stately couple just easing themselves into bed; he to see his ex-mistress, Jan, and to bend the captive ear of her husband, Nick, who is immobile beneath the duvet with spine trouble; and then the two of them, after a dawn rapprochement over the phone, back to 'make it up' to the wretched, doomed Malcolm and Kate. Their self-absorption is absolute, and destructive not only to other people's sleep. Somehow they manage to provoke Kate to tell an outraged Malcolm he's boring in bed, and Jan to feel still more neglected by Nick, who is already something of a workoholic. Even Delia finds herself serenely reciting Ernest's failings while he festers in a damp, uncomfortable attic offstage. Typhoid Mary has passed impartially through, sprinkling infection on wall-to-wall Wilton and British Home Stores lampshades alike.

Perhaps Ayckbourn should have made it still clearer that Trevor and Susannah are damaging as well as oblivious to others, but it is his play and not mine, and he may well have felt he had darkened the comedy enough already. For this *is* a comedy, in spite of the suburban disenchantment, and a funny, inventive one. Only occasionally does Ayckbourn become victim rather than master of his characteristically ingenious setting, three double-beds in a squat, tidy row, each representing a different room, a different couple, a different style of middle-class life. In general, the visual gags and verbal humour emerge logically enough from character, as they always do when Ayckbourn is on song. It is Trevor's inability to take the remotest interest in anything or anyone outside himself that keeps him sublimely unaware that people are inwardly raging at him, and the same trait that leads him accidentally to douse the put-upon Nick with a glass of water, probably the evening's funniest moment. The mutual incomprehension that separates Delia, who feels that 'S-E-X' (as she calls it) is best ignored, from the rampaging self-revelations of Susannah is scarcely less hilarious.

But my main complaint also involves Susannah, or rather the gifted young actress playing her, Maria Aitken. Ayckbourn is a cool chronicler of Home-Counties ennui, but not a callous one; and if his protagonists are horribly clamorous, it is, he knows, because they urgently need attention. There is a certain pathos in the pep-talk Susannah regularly gives herself: 'I am not unattractive, I am confident in myself, people are not frightening, I am not frightened.' But Miss Aitken seems embarrassed to find unhappiness in a 'funny' play, and puts as much distance as she can between herself and the emotions ascribed to the character: she spoofs Susannah's battened-down hysteria, and so misses the chance to deepen the comedy without, I suspect, sacrificing very much laughter. Fortunately, the rest of the production Ayckbourn has co-directed with Peter Hall is more measured, and there are nice, observant performances from Michael Gough, Michael Kitchen, Derek Newark, Joan Hickson and (especially) Stephen Moore as Trevor. They may not be a very appetising ad. for Ayckbourne the town – better, by far, East, Sitting, Glynde or any other English bourne – but they have done well by Ayckbourn the dramatist.

The Actors Company, back in south-west London for a brief season, have done well by Pinero too, though I can't help thinking him a less deserving beneficiary. *The Amazons* is a slim piece that teeters uneasily between sentimental comedy and ritualistic farce, with three titled maidens pursued by three well-bred swains, all very much against the wishes of their mother, the bulldog Marchioness of Castle Jordan. The twist is that the girls, being daughters of parents who always craved sons, have been brought up as boys, while their camp-followers tend to effeminacy. Hence Helen Cotterill's Lady Thomas in her shooting breeches, knees thrust heartily apart as she exchanges swaggering smoking-room banter with her 'brothers'; and hence Hugh Walters's Earl of Tweenwayes, who walks like a pigeon and has a liver like one too. Nowadays, of course, that sort of inversion would be more psychosexual than comic, and it would be impossible to handle it with complete innocence; but Pinero hadn't read his Havelock Ellis, and manages to do so, for what the achievement is worth. Taste isn't lacking: laughter, alas, too often is.

Blind Date brings Frank Marcus back to the stage, though only for some 45 minutes, just enough time for Nigel Hawthorne and Julia Foster to make their rendezvous, fail to recognise each other, lapse into desultory conversation, and then drift embarrassedly and separately away, having realised their mutual mistake. It's well-told and well-acted, tartly anecdotal beside Snoo Wilson's *Vampire*, which, as stories go, tends towards the shaggy-gothic. The urge to show us society with its teeth in our collective necks takes him from 19th-century sexual repression to early 20th-century war-hysteria to a modern bedlam involving Patty Hearst, Hell's Angels and crashed-out squatters in Kew Gardens. A sprawl; but an imaginative, entertaining sprawl.

Radio

Eric Korn

The Persuaders

'On no account display any ring, watch, or trinket, nor any airs of consequence . . . Affect not the character of a magnificent fool: it is an irresistible enticement to Innkeepers to raise their charges.' Sage, sombre advice abounded in the writings of William Kitchener, MD, interspersed with snatches of songs of his own composition, and puffs for his potions and publications: *'The Cook's Oracle* – the acme of culinary literature', and 'Kitchener's Peristaltic Persuaders'. His *Traveller's Oracle* (or *Maxims for Locomotion*) is a rich, unexploited field of absurdity, into which Radio 3 is currently sinking (Tuesdays, fortnightly) a few rewarding test drillings. The yield is pumped with well-lubricated orotundity by David

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Lloyd James and Victor Lucas, making admirable use of the human voice, an instrument designed by nature to serve the ends of radio.

No airs of consequence were assumed by Charles Causley in a memorably unadorned account of his years spent caring for an incapacitated mother, an account free of both mawkishness and self-congratulation: 'Death, monumentally, took its time.' This programme, in Radio 4's Lent series called *The Bare Essentials*, is very different from the glutinous or self-righteous rubbish the season often evokes. Far from Lenten, Walt Whitman was permitted to celebrate himself and his country in *Child of Adam* (Radio 3): 'The United States, themselves, are essentially, the greatest poem.' The demonstration was effective, because unaffected.

Some producers, however, can't leave well alone. Radio 4's *Place of Martyrs* told compellingly how accumulated human nastiness has turned the merely uninviting Robben Island, South Africa's prison colony, into one of the nastiest places on earth, massacring the wild life and settling first a convicted murderer and 'his eight lewd companions', and then lepers, madmen, exiled Malayan Rajahs and anyone who rebelled against the march of imperialism. 'Why should the Bishop insist that justice be done to black and white alike? It is the grossest ill taste in a clergyman,' asked the spiritual ancestor of one of today's unspeakable jailers. 'There was no more saddening want than the want of music,' recalled a recent prisoner, but the programmes didn't take the hint. Paul Scofield, and the less familiar black voices, didn't need the overwrought presentation or the obtrusive effects.

Contrariwise, Gerhardi's *Polyglots* (Radio 4), was underdramatised, narrative and illustrative dialogue alternating dully, as in a language lesson. 'We stood and listened to the gulls, the wind and the rain,' said the narrator. And gulls, wind and rain conscientiously made their appearance. Gerhardi's ripe monsters, with their Chekhovian pretensions ('If there is no eternity now, mankind may create it after our time') and unabashed opportunism, deserved better than this. Radio 3 showed what imagination and technology can do in Radio France's prizewinning *Forget Me Not*, a spoof on Romantic excesses and Comédie Française declamation is of limited appeal to Anglophones, but the classy stereo sound – apparently produced by a cast of demented bats in a hollowed-out iceberg, rumbling and chittering in startling fashion – dazzled with its virtuoso charm, as if half the transistors in the radio set had come alive for the first time.

Iain Hamilton's *Tamburlaine* (Radio 3), only distantly derived from Marlowe, with Theridamas, traitor and loyal supporter, as the focus of dramatic interest, was an opera genuinely composed for radio, and not merely for first performance on radio. Ronald Pickup read Samuel Beckett's long-lost translation, recovered in a single, scorched and waterstained copy, of Rimbaud's *Bateau Ivre* (which Derek Mahon discusses on p.403). Radio 4's extended tour of the get-thee - to - Gloucester - saucy - Worcester territory, *Vivat Rex*, is clean and competent, with a cast among whom Derek Jacobi, Michael Redgrave and Sarah Badel have been notable; whimsically it is called 'a dramatic chronicle . . . by the Elizabethan playwrights Shakespeare, Marlowe, and their contemporaries', instead of saying 'most of Shakespeare's *Richard II* except that we have cut out some long dull bits, and replaced them with short dull bits, with which Richard Burton is doing his best'.

Sunday lunchtime on Radio 3 is brightened by *Alistair Cooke's Jazzmen*, as though half his transistors had come alive for the first time. A real peristaltic persuader.

Television

Ian Hamilton

The Fidgets

When I was about twelve I was moved from a vaguely genteel semi-boarding school in Norfolk to a real-life urban hell-hole up in County Durham. The transition was a cruel jolt to one so pale and loitering as I was at that age. My new school was ugly, backward and chaotic. The new teachers were stupider than the old, more fair-isled and buck-toothed; my new classmates were spottier, more smelly and ill-read than even the most disagreeable and loutish of my former chums. In only one respect could the new lot boast of being a year or two ahead of those I'd left behind; they were all deft and tirelessly committed 'wankers'.

Yes, I'm afraid they were at it all the time – behind the bikesheds, in the prose bits of assembly, and throughout long stretches of the *Aeneid* Book III. You couldn't turn into a corridor or enter a momentarily deserted classroom without startling a bowed and vivid colleague; and as for 'playtime' and 'lunch-break' – these were cues merely for a dispersal of the hollow-eyed to various dark corners of the school. In class, the activity was known as 'fidgeting' and the teachers were powerless to put a stop to it. 'Robinson, stop fidgeting!', they'd scream, and the class would instantly collapse in mirth, bang desks, clap, cheer and shout obscenities. By the time this had died down it would be someone else's turn to fidget. And so on. Teachers didn't last long at my school.

Memories of those crazed, defeated pedagogues came flooding back as I watched the scenes of classroom horror portrayed in Monday's *Panorama* (BBC-1). Although the schoolkids under scrutiny – students at a comprehensive in West London – didn't display the same intense involvement with their hobbies as my chums, they knew plenty of ways of driving teacher mad. And the teachers, who must have been half-mad to join up in the first place, were shown as having long passed the point where anyone could sensibly think of them as instructors of the young. Their job, according to this film, was to reduce the noise level just a bit, to curb impertinences very slightly, to get the 'lesson' finished without actually beating anyone to death. We saw them trying to be strict, trying to ingratiate themselves ('Hi, sweetie, *why* are you bored?'), trying to be man-to-man; whatever the approach the kids would carry on chewing their gum, reading their comics, chattering disaffectedly among themselves, as if they were the audience at some cabaret in which the none too rivetting star turn was some mad fellow who did tricks with a piece of chalk.

The programme lacked commentary and provided only the barest statistics about the school, and it is no surprise that the headmaster who let the telly in is now TV-shy. The film was sensation-seeking, and one suspects heavily slanted towards shocking us into a wariness about our local comprehensive; almost without exception, the children shown didn't want to learn, and the teachers had no idea how to teach. Knowing, as we now do, that two of the most incompetent-looking teachers were in their first term, and that the school as a whole is officially recognised by the Department of Education as being more 'difficult' than most (teachers get extra pay for teaching there) would not have blunted any major points, but it might have reassured us about the film's impartiality. Another reassurance would have been a more detailed look at what happens in the school's sixth form; we were shown two high-achievers on the brink of university careers, but given no idea of how they could possibly, in such a school, have got so far. No doubt they were among the most persistent truants. Ealing teachers are now asking for an opportunity to reply; it surely wouldn't have messed up the film's *vérité* to have had a few of them in the studio on Monday night.

Perhaps *People to People* (BBC-2) will find a slot for them, desperate as the show seems to be for burning topics. Last Saturday, the topic was Soccer as Religion; hard for the fan not to take a look, but sure enough Brian Trueman knows how to dampen even the sure-fire. Danny Blanchflower was at his most portentous ('football reflects the unrest under the surface of society') and seemed faintly surprised to find that the assembled sociologists employed jargon not dissimilar to his. We heard about battles for territoriality, about the ritual elements of crowd behaviour (these insights accompanied by shots of stomping Zulus – from West Ham?) and about the 'football pitch as the vortex of society'. When abstractions were available, the contributors were encouraged to develop them. Inspired cartoons from Bill Tidy, and some commonsense from Tom Finney and Jack Taylor, failed to save the day.

With the BBC's Clint Eastwood season regrettably at an end, might I be allowed to voice a question that's been nagging me for the last couple of weeks, or since whenever it was the *Radio Times* published a cover-story on the star? On the face of it, the essay – written by Bruce Jay Friedman and bought by *RT* from *Esquire* – was of staggering pretentiousness, promoting in vapid philosophese the notion of Clint as a 'mythic' hero:

> Take away that squint and the electronic music and what have you got? I happen to think you've got plenty. Let me throw a hot

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potato into this: I've come to the conclusion that he got that squint by trying to make difficult moral choices. Which is why he would latch on to someone like Heidegger.

And so on, for about 3,000 words, with pics, endorsing headlines, the full solemn treatment. If to be taken straight (that's to say, as it is presented) it's enough to make you weep. If not – and Friedman is noted as an at any rate off-white satirist of some sophistication – then someone on the *Radio Times* ought by now to be developing a squint. To quote that famous line from *Dirty Harry*: 'Please, I *gotch* to know.'

Films

John Coleman

Hairy

A Star is Born *Warner West End 2; ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue*
Chikamatsu Monogatari *The Gate*

Miss Streisand has the most terribly sincere hair in her latest movie, an up-dated re-remake of *A Star is Born*. Where Janet Gaynor and Fredric March respectively rose and fell in William Wellman's 1937 original, on the script on which Dorothy Parker collaborated; where Judy Garland and James Mason did more of the same in George Cukor's 1954 version, in which Miss Garland blousily bloomed in a couple of cracking numbers, her authentic vibrato echoing a showbiz world of instant peripeteia and Mr Mason supplying marvellously unselfish support as the actor-husband on the skids; where so much is memory of simpler times in the dark, of Rorschach tests for the few illuminati around, it is – put mildly – an occasion when our Barbra, Barbra Strident, teams up with dozy Kris Kristofferson to give us 140 minutes of the old, recycled heartbreak. It may be unfortunate that the first words we hear, subsequently taken to refer to a mike, are, 'Is this thing working?' The credits follow but a modicum of conviction has been lost, notwithstanding a great crash of applause on the sound-track. And it has been practically impossible not to know something about the fraught makings of this vehicle, a tandem with only one foot really allowed to pedal, over the past few weeks. TV and colour mags have done it loud. The named director, Frank Pierson, is said to have suffered interventions from all over, including some earlier material shot by the star's hairdresser, Jon Peters. But if anyone's stamp is on the finished product it is the Grauman's Chinese Theater (*sic*) signature of Barbra Streisand, who figures on the billboard as executive producer, part-author of a couple of the songs, wholly responsible for 'musical concepts', leading player and furnisher of her own flimsy duds ('Ms Streisand's clothes from . . . her closet').

This formidable lady has reminded us in previous outings of Nefertiti and an anteater, depending on the angle from which she has been photographed and the care with which she has been made up or filtered. She has a very evident nose, through which she does at least some of her singing, and it is probably a pity that her man here is encouraged to stroke it amorously. To find *that* kinky is to ignore the boldness of her Harpo-Afro hairdo. A residual courtliness would normally hold us back from attacking an actress on the grounds that she is plain, but such restraints may surely be thrown to the winds when the woman herself is so intently concerned to stress her physical defects: from a *jolie-laide*, she has become a laid *laide*. The man who falls for her, and speeds his own descent to oblivion in the process, is a bearded rock star, John Norman Howard (Mr Kristofferson), a cocaine-sniffer and bottle-man given to such attaching foibles as losing his lines on stage and riding bikes into the audience, thereby becoming the shit who hits the fans. Esther Hoffman (Streisand) is not too wild about his first appearance at a club she's playing – 'you're blowing my act' – yet readily enough rides off with him in his expensive black hearse after, lets him in for a contrite breakfast at 7 a.m., and beds him less than a reel later. This John Norman has to mumble some pretty dire dialogue from the start: his driver, 'Where to?' – he, 'Back about 10 years'; and, for all the K.K. charisma (which, one charitably imagines, is a States-side phenomenon rather than anything calculated to spell wish-fulfilment to home teenagers), a bit of a drag from very early on. The star who is borne is none other than B.S., on self-propelled wings, throughout. One has never seen her so humourless: her later line, 'I'm a non-violent person', is only funny in its wilful context.

There has to be a lesson to be learned from this expensive indulgence, which crams in an over-heated short-course in the mechanics of pop-idols, their managers and the sad, silly sub-world of groupies: one would like it to be the salutary one that some stars shine more brightly in a controlled orbit. Barbra Streisand has proved herself, funny girl, owl, pussycat, even querulously asking, 'What's up, doc?', as a raucous comedienne of fine timing, a singer of raunchy range, a huge, screen-filling personality capable of modulations when the signs are she is about to be allowed over the top. Here she does herself a notable disservice. A disc jockey says to her, 'You're dynamite, but get rid of the creep, huh?' He says this about a third of the way into things and one can't help but feel he is standing in for milady. What makes the whole mess that crucial mile more painful is the sense that its distaff superstar may even have thought, at moments during her making, that she was being more honest than ever before, cutting down on the gauze and glamour in the cause of some kind of greater truth, letting her hair not so much down as out for *real*. Alas for the outcome. Even the scene hitherto reckoned unruinable – where sliding hubby turns up at rising wifey's awards ceremony (Esther now getting a Grammy) and embarrasses the hell out of the assembled company by lurching about on stage and on media – goes for very little in this hip translation: nowadays, TV is all too ripe for such booboos and we hardly shifted in our seats. After all, old John Norman/Kris Kristofferson had behaved infinitely worse in concert and it seems centuries since our own Ken Tynan said 'fuck' on the box.

Kenji Mizoguchi's *Chikamatsu Monogatari*, made towards the end of his prolific career, in 1954, is a stunningly crafted film, exhibiting this past master of the Japanese cinema at full stretch. The story is based on a play by Monzaemon Chikamatsu, setting off in Kyoto in 1683, and has probably the thriftiest exposition of a fairly complex plot one can remember, dealing out in a handful of short episodes the principal characters and their fatalistically intercut problems. We begin in a grand scroll-maker's workshop: he has the enviable contract for the printing of the official calendar for the Imperial Household. He also has Osan (Kyoko Kagawa), a bought wife, as later emerges, and a brilliant artist/artisan, Mohei (played by the fortyish Kazuo Hasegawa), numbly in love with Osan and uncompromisingly forced by circumstance to elope with her. The intricate family ties and the prevailing codes of honour that both bring this to a short, superb fruition and to a foredoomed downfall are touched in with the thriftiest of brush-strokes. The painterly image, of course, is intentional, in line with Mizoguchi's rightly praised genius for a sequential frame-by-frame development of a harsh, moral tale. The depth-focus of Kazuo Miyagawa's photography is at times the nearest thing to 3-D, lending a solidity through receding planes, that one is likely to see in black-and-white cinema: or, rather, a cinema that wonderfully exploits firm tones of grey. One sequence, of the runaway lovers stealthily boating on a lake, carries a charge of sudden passion that makes the chic beddings in *A Star is Born* number three look like commercials.

Censorship

Julian Barnes

Two-Nil

In 1971 the US Supreme Court, considering the case of an anti-war demonstrator arrested because his jacket bore a slogan containing a four-letter word, came up with an agreeably-phrased reason for acquitting the man. 'It is often true,' observed Justice John Hanlan, 'that one man's vulgarity is another man's lyric' (though doubtless the demonstrator was aiming only incidentally at lyricism). Whenever there is a question of stopping people saying, printing or doing things, or punishing them afterwards for having done so, the debate normally becomes lively; even lawyers seem to realise that their habitual and loved clichés amount to a form of censorship of thought. Besides, there is no one who, deep down, doesn't want to censor something; while the things

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that everyone else wants to censor usually appear arbitrary and ridiculous. There is probably someone somewhere, for instance, (in convent-school common-room or Sunday-dry stronghold) who would still endorse Bowdler's marvellously inept reworking of Amiens's song in *As You Like It*: 'Under the greenwood tree/Who loves to work with me?'

The idea, therefore, of a full-scale public examination of censorship in the arts and the media, first announced by the ICA almost a year ago, is extremely welcome. The series (which runs until the beginning of June, on Tuesdays at 7 p.m.) started off with two seminars on 'Censorship and the Press', considering first the legal aspects of censorship, and then the question of control over the content of newspapers. Both, however, have proved only patchily instructive, interesting largely in matters of detail, in examples of day-to-day legal and editorial decisions. It was illuminating, for instance, to hear of Chapman Pincher's rule for evading the Official Secrets Act (never handle a single document), of Donald Trelford's arguments with George Melly about the permissible level of obscenity in his copy, of the pervasiveness of the law of contempt (thus truths discovered by *Sunday Times* reporters about thalidomide still can't even be passed on to journalists on the same paper). One noted, too, how in recent years the nature of the threats to editorial freedom has shifted: contempt has now replaced libel as the most worrying and unpredictable external threat; while the possibility of a closed shop seems to have taken the place of the bogy of proprietorial intervention.

But as far as wider accusations of principle and theory went, the meetings failed to generate much energy. At the first, barristers and journalists invited to discuss 'Is the law the best censor?' took it as read that though the law was a frequent irritant, and though the Government is annoyingly sitting on four reports (on privacy, defamation, secrecy and contempt), there was no obvious or possible alternative to legal censorship. From the floor, Simon Jenkins identified areas of journalistic self-censorship (the parole of criminals, the activities of the children of the famous), but no one suggested, in the present competitive market, that the system would work on a wider scale. The following week the putative question, 'Is the Press too important to be left to journalists?', received similarly scant treatment. Nobody on the panel wanted the Press to be left to anyone but journalists. But then this was hardly very surprising, as the panel consisted of the editor of the *Guardian*, the editor of the *Observer* and the former General Secretary of the NUJ. No lack of quality there, but a clear lack of balance, caused, no doubt, by the location chosen for these discussions. The pro-censorship lobby may be noisy and often reliably silly, but at least it knows the best places to fight. Who, after all, would choose to argue for vegetarianism in a lion's den before a kop of carnivores? As a result, the occasional disagreements during the reasonable and humane evenings so far at the ICA have been between liberals on the one hand, and different kinds of liberals on the other. Later meetings look as if they might throw up some unusual material – particularly those on freedom in the visual arts (31 March) and in music (19 May). But so far it has been rather like watching that bizarre film of the Chilean football team turning out in full kit and scoring their symbolic World Cup 'goal' in Santiago, when their Russian opponents refused to play. It was a goal in a sense, of course, but in what valuable sense?

Jazz

Charles Fox

In Cahoots

Stan Tracey Quartet: Jazz Suite Inspired by 'Under Milk Wood' (1965 version, *Steam SJ101* £3.25; 1976 version, with Donald Houston *Steam TAA 271* £3.25); **'Captain Adventure'** *Steam SJ102* £3.25
Stan Tracey Octet: 'The Bracknell Connection' *Steam SJ103* £3.25
Mike Osborne/Stan Tracey: 'Tandem' *Ogun OG210* £3.25

The prospect of making an LP – just like that of being hanged, or even less melodramatic deadlines – acts, as Fleet Street's Grand Cham very properly pointed out, as a great concentrator of the mind. It explains, among other things, the sudden appearance of those jazz suites with literary alibis. Not the earliest: Duke Ellington's *Such Sweet Thunder*, devised for a Shakespearance festival in Canada. But John Dankworth's *What the Dickens?* was an example of what the record business means by a 'concept LP'. And in Stan Tracey's case the opportunity to record his Quartet came first, the idea of basing a suite on Dylan Thomas's radio play very decidedly second.

That was in 1965, when Tracey was most familiar to British jazz aficionados as the pianist who accompanied one American musician after another at Ronnie Scott's Club. But he led, and wrote for, his own quartet which included the Glaswegian tenor saxophonist, Bobby Wellins, his sound pale and wan, his lines uncluttered, adept at holding emotion just below the skin. It is Wellins's saxophone that hangs in the air in *Starless and Bible Black*, which provides the lusciousness of *Under Milk Wood*.

Up to a point, that is. The real identity comes from Stan Tracey's harmonic presence, the way he shapes and buttresses his themes. He was doing the same 11 years later when he re-recorded the same pieces. By then Wellins had been replaced by Art Themen, the nearest equivalent in jazz to one of the great amateur batsmen of cricket's Golden Age, a surgeon by day, a saxophonist – and brilliant, too – by night. But where Wellins often resembled a Celtic Stan Getz, Themen has a fleshier, more lustful sound, breathy – like Ben Webster – in slow numbers, agitated – like Sonny Rollins – at faster tempi. But the most radical difference is that the newer recording uses words as well as music, very risky when the poet happens to be as sonorous as Dylan Thomas. Donald Houston avoids that problem by mostly reading in between movements.

History often needs footnotes. It's frequently overlooked that when Stan Tracey first recorded *Under Milk Wood*, he was, rather like Bach in his heyday, something of a musical conservative. 1965, after all, was the year Ornette Coleman visited Britain, the year a new generation of local jazz players – John Surman, Chris McGregor, Mike Osborne, John Stevens – began surfacing. Yet most jazz musicians of Tracey's age-group believed the rules of their art were fixed, somehow becoming non-negotiable at about the moment they mastered them.

Tracey turned into an exception. Not with his suite (it swivels around fairly traditional chord sequences) but after the original quartet had broken up. His most successful forays into 'free' playing (the term is sadly inaccurate, yet nobody has come up with anything more succinct) have been with the alto saxophonist Mike Osborne, a picaresque soloist, always able to detect where the pianist is heading – and to take the initiative himself when needed. *Tandem*, a set of duets recorded last year, is certainly not flawless – very little genuine jazz is, devised as it must be on a human scale – yet it offers the listener a fascinating mix of the lyrical and the abrasive.

But even in his freest outings Tracey remains an harmonic thinker. Indeed, harmony is the underlying discipline within his present-day quartet, a group as remarkable as the quartet of the Sixties, with Art Themen partnering Tracey every bit as audaciously as Wellins or Osborne have done. They use few themes, preferring to work straight off the chords. (*Captain Adventure* is actually based on the chords of *I Got Rhythm*, favourites with jazz improvisers ever since Sidney Bechet used them for *Shag* back in 1932, only two years after Gershwin's song turned up in *Girl Crazy*.)

Incidentally, Tracey's quartet is appearing at Ronnie Scott's Club until 2 April. And it tours with Donald Houston, doing *Under Milk Wood*, after a performance on 1 April at the Shaw Theatre, as part of next week's Camden Jazz Festival. The previous night Tracey and his music get celebrated in Omnibus on BBC. A pleasingly active period in the life of a British musician who will be 50 next December, and who, only seven years ago, was so pessimistic about his future that he seriously thought about becoming a postman.

Stan Tracey's music often used to get described as Monkish, largely because of his fondness for throwing in staccato chords. Yet both Tracey and Thelonious Monk owe a lot to the same musician – Duke Ellington. Tracey's methods as a pianist – the way some notes stick out in his chords, for instance – are similar to Ellington's; so is his philosophy as a composer. 'Every musician has his favourite licks and you gotta write to them,' Ellington once declared. That admonition gets obeyed in *The Bracknell Connection* (it was written for last summer's Bracknell Jazz Festival),

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performed by an Octet that included the alto saxophonist Peter King, a man with his roots in bebop. Far from insisting that all his soloists improvise on the same material, Tracey actually provides individual sets of chords, the equivalent of a personal springboard. And the scoring acts as both a setting and a further stimulus. It's the latest, and one of the most successful, attempts by this extraordinary musician at showing, as Jelly Roll, Duke, Mingus and a select handful of others have done in the past, that truth can be paradoxical and the composer operate in cahoots with the improviser.

Opera

John Morgan

Love Match

Orfeo *Kent Opera*
Così fan tutte *Kent Opera*

The gifted caravanserai moves on, last week at the Cambridge Arts Theatre, next at the Camden Festival, on to Paignton, Bournemouth, Stirling even, and then, in autumn, swings through the West and back home to Canterbury, playing so far to crowded, cheering audiences. The productions, given the difficulties of small houses and smallish budgets, are not merely, to borrow a phrase, a credit to all concerned but a buoyant testimony to the quality of musical performance among the British young. Roger Norrington's small orchestra plays with a precision and evident delight that would be inspiriting enough even if nothing much were catching the eye and ear on stage. In one way, it's a shame that they have the disgruntlements of celebrity ahead.

For what happens on the boards in both these productions Jonathan Miller is responsible, and very interesting it all is. Some of our grander companies could learn from the sensible fashion in which aspiration is married to budget, in the shrewd concentration on the feasible. Naturally, in the *Orfeo,* nothing much can happen, Monteverdi being a Stone Age opera composer. Here Dr Miller's invention, which accords generally with his well-known interest in the correspondences between art-forms, is to invoke Poussin's *Dance to the Music of Time.* That it was not a disastrous invention must be due to his gifts as a director of actors. Certainly the cast, singly and in concert, behaved with a discipline and intelligence rare on an opera stage. (The same turned out to be true of the *Così.*) In a little theatre, with the audience pressing close, a flaw in an interpretation so dependent on manner shows in a way it seldom does in a major opera house where the mischievous can get away with private feuds, giggles and general tormenting of colleagues and conductors. Here the line never wavered, the square – or, rather, Poussin's circle – never broke.

More difficulties are, naturally, presented by *Così fan tutte,* it being the most perfect opera of the greatest of composers. Indeed it is an opera impossible to produce to anyone's complete satisfaction because of the central difficulty of resolving the contrast between libretto and music in certain passages in the second act. Words and action might suggest a consistency throughout; we have a familiar, witty tale of the inconstancy of woman, revealed by the device of two friends attempting, for a bet, to seduce each other's lover, and succeeding. Never, of course, a nice way to behave. But is Mozart saying something else?

Dr Miller's view – and his production almost brings it off – is that the men, Ferrando (Neil Jenkins) and Guglielmo (Thomas Lawlor), by parading themselves in disguise in order to pursue each other's girl, bring 'the whole issue of personal identity into question'. The set – again a model of economy – invokes the spirit of the neo-classical David (I think). The theory is that this place is hypothetical and the people come and go through two open doors from dark to light. It is a beguiling view interpreted by the cast with real brilliance. The singing was elegant throughout, Anne Pashley, Alan Watt, Elisabeth Ander and Margaret Cable quite matching the two bucks. The woodwind section of the orchestra – so vital in *Così* – were marvellously at Mr Norrington's command.

And yet from the moment that Fiordiligi – the more reluctant of the women – began *Fra gli amplessi in pochi istanti,* or, since it was in English, 'I shall be in the arms of my true love . . . ', the familiar uneasiness at any *Così* production began. From that moment, which could easily have seemed part of, say, the G-minor String Quartet, and carrying through probably the most moving duet Mozart wrote for soprano and tenor, I find it impossible to believe that the universal genius was not saying something different from the libretto. The earlier duets between the true lovers is charming; the music for the false lovers is serious: does it then follow that Mozart is suggesting that the lovers have discovered the early love false, the new one true, and that this has been the consequence of the cynical wager that set all in train? Such a view would suggest that Dr Miller, in his interpretation, had leapt a Viennese century, and that *Così* is not about a question of identity but a matter of recognising the character of love. Which, of course, makes it a tragedy rather than a comedy if, at the curtain, the lovers revert to their original partners. Whether they do or not is another question.

Weekend Competition

No 2456 **Set by Pat Blackford**

Let us have, while the Editor sleeps, a thoroughly reactionary poem on the joys of being really rich, nasty, racist, chauvinistic, snobbish, etc. Twelve lines or so by 8 April.

No 2453 **Set by Gerry Hamill**

St Thomas More is the only MP ever to be canonised. Competitors were asked to put the claims of more recent Members, in the style of any Laureate.

Report **by Spiro Keats**

You've been giving Little Keith some stick over the last fortnight for his impertinent remarks about Emily Dickinson. Quite right too – no one here agrees with him either. He now enigmatically paces the corridors of the comp. complex, a reviled and jeered-at figure, uncertain and afraid (even Fat Jeff cheeked him the other day, to Little Keith's total mortification). As for this week, well, panegyric isn't really your style: you need something to get your knives into. Tennyson on Benn, Alfred Austin on Balfour, Cibber on Sir Harold, Wordsworth on Lloyd George: £5 each.

He comes from haunts of dukes and dons,
He knocks his *own* Aunt Sally,
A man of Gold among the Bronze –
Patrician in the galley!

His truth is not beset with doubt,
He sees no Leyland failing;
And who can blame his boyish pout,
When mortal fools are railing?

His soul's eternal; this I know
(Like Alfred's brimming river).
While Right and Centre change and grow,
The Left goes on for ever! T. HOPE

Thy name be blessed, Saint Arthur Balfour!
Your mien is suave, your mind is Alpha.
Beneath your languid air patrician,
There lurks a most astute tactician;
And tho' the Libs may bray and bluster,
You're never in the slightest fluster.
Although not fond of wild carouses,
You often visit Country Houses,
From whose palatial halls there stem
So many of our nation's *crème.*
Where gather the *Illuminati,*
There too you're numbered midst the party . .
MARTIN FAGG

Britannia, hark, the seraphim have caroll'd
The worthy sainthood of thy fair Sir Harold.
His books reveal'd the paragon he's been,
Belov'd of Heav'n and, better still, the Queer

A man who loved the Right, though socialist,
He rightly steer'd thy ship of state, I wist.
On his motley crew, great honours he bestowe
Ere he forsook his Captaincy's great load.
Wise and yet modest, as his own words
do shov
And since he's quick, he's quick to tell thee s
Though Briton's poor, thy saint is not to blam
His white hot fire hath left thy land the same.
A. BOTEMAN

I met a little cottage-girl;
She strutted by my side.
'Now tell me, little maid,' asked I,
'Whence comes such sinful pride?'
'Why, Lloyd George knew my father, sir,'
This innocent child replied.
'And father knew Lloyd George,' said she,
'And mother did as well.'
Her childish laughter in my ears
Rang like a silver bell.
He whom a wise child honours thus
Must sure in heaven dwell. MARY VISICK

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Tony Miles

Chess

No 26 **At Bad Lauterberg**

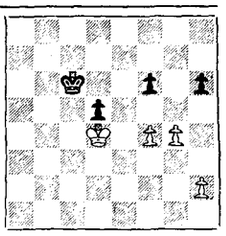
To commemorate the 100th anniversary of its founding the German Chess Federation are currently holding an extremely strong Grandmaster tournament at Bad Lauterberg. The 16 players are made up of the World Champion Anatoly Karpov, 12 other GMs, including Ray Keene and myself, and the three top players from the W. German Championship. The event is in FIDE category 12 with an average tournament rating of about 2530 (241 on the English system) and the top 13 players average over 2560. Karpov virtually clinched first place in the opening rounds by starting with 5½/6, conceding a draw only to his trainer Furman, and thus opening up a lead of 1½ points. The rest of the field is closely bunched and the other places are unlikely to be settled before the last round. I started in unconvincing fashion, scoring only 1 point from my first four games, due partly to the following disaster.

White: J. Timman. **Black: A. J. Miles.**

1. P-K4, P-QB4. I have come to the conclusion that this is a mistake against Timman and that one should play something boring such as 1. . . . P-K3, 1. . . . P-QB3 or 1. . . . P-K4. **2. N-KB3, P-Q3; 3. P-Q4, P x P; 4. N x P, N-KB3; 5. N-QB3, P-KN3; 6. B-K3, B-N2; 7. P-B3, 0-0; 8. Q-Q2, N-B3; 9. 0-0-0.** This line has rather gone out of fashion in recent years. 9. B-QB4 is more usual. **9. . . . P-Q4.** The alternative is 9. . . . N x N; 10. B x N, B-K3. **10. P x P, N x P; 11. KN x N, P x N; 12. B-Q4, P-K4; 13. B-B5, B-K3; 14. N-K4, R-K1; 15. P-KR4.** Following some old theory. One idea is now 15. . . . P-B4; 16. N-N5, B-R3 as in Keres-Hartston – simultaneous display(!) when white now blundered with 17. K-N1? B x N; 18. P x B, N-B6ch! with a raging attack. The text is more (over?) ambitious. **15. . . . R-N1; 16. P-KN4, P-B4; 17. P x P, P x P; 18. N-Q6, R-KB1.** Up to here the game has followed Sigurjonsson-Miles from Wijk-aan-Zee '77 which Timman apparently annotated for the tournament book! There I tried 18. . . . B-KB1 which was met by the very powerful 19. B-B4!! Later Timman told me that he had suggested 18. . . . R-KB1 as an improvement. **19. N-B4, K-R1.** In this position it is much more important to preserve the B-squared B than the R. **20. R-N1, B-B3; 21. Q-R6, R-B2; 22. B-R3.** Possibly better is 22. B-Q6 when black must try 22. . . . P-K5. **22. . . . R-Q2; 23. B-Q6.** This move came as a great surprise since I thought that I had prevented it! **23. . . . N-B5.** Now 24. B x R (or KP) loses to . . . N-K7ch and if 24. N x KP black can try 24. . . . R x B or 24. . . . N-K7ch; 25. K-N1, R x Pch; 26. K x R, R x B. Meanwhile white has 2 pieces attacked and 24. B-B1 fails to B x N; 25. B x B, R x B; 26. R-N8ch, Q x R; 27. B x Q, N-K7ch so what is white to do? **24. R-Q2!!** This astonishing quiet move had a terrible effect on me. Mesmerised by such variations as 24. . . . N x B? 25. B x P, B x B; 26. N x B, N x R; 27. R x R, N-K7ch; 28. K-Q1 winning, and 24. . . . B x N; 25. B x BP, R(N1)-N2 (or 25. . . . N-K7ch; 26. R x N, B x R; 27. B x R(Q7)); 26. B x KP! B x B; 27. Q x Pch!! R x Q; 28. R x Q mate. I completely failed to find the only reasonable defence namely 24 . . . . B x N; 25. B x BP, B-K3, and now if 26. B x R, B x B! 27. R x R, B x R or 26. B x B, N x B; 27. B x R, R x R; 28. Q x R, Q x B and white can only force a draw by 29. Q-Q7! N-Q5; 30. Q-KB7! Q-Q1; 31. R-N8ch! etc., and instead consumed practically all my remaining time before producing **24 . . . . R-N4?** when after **25. B-B1!** all white's pieces are safe again and black has no moves and no time. The game concluded **25. . . . R-Q4; 26. R x R, N x R; 27. B x P, R-KB2; 28. Q-N5, Q-KB1; 29. B x Bch, R x B; 30. N-R5, N-K2; 31. B-B4, B x B; 32. N-Q7 Resigns.**

Problem 26:

White to play. Can he win? Entries to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than Tuesday 5 April.

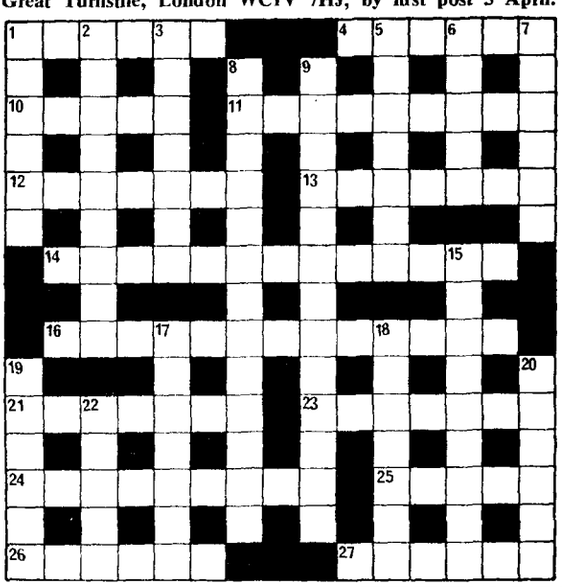


Solution to Problem 24:

1. R-B6! and if 1. . . . P x R; 2. Q-N6ch and 3. R x P mate. Otherwise black has no defence to the threat of 2. R x RP! If 1. . . . R-K3; 2. B x R.

Weekend Crossword 1208

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1208, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 5 April.



ACROSS

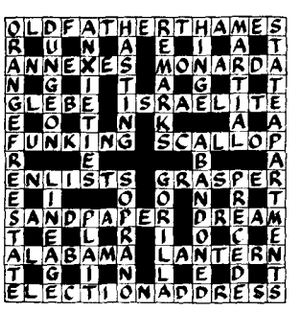
1. Periods for magic (6).
4. The journalist travelled back without it (6).
10. The lady of rank has to live with the opposite of a simpleton (5).
11. Indiscriminate hater paid for cause of hatred (9).
12. Twice retired without a place of retirement (7).
13. Transport workers in mineral workings (7).
14. Material which could provide them with real proof (13).
16. Wealth in counterfeit coin held by a soldier and me (7, 6).
21. Circle over it if the town were in ruins (7).
23. Cost of delivery from Gestapo reform (7).
24. I prefer to ruin one who makes too much (9).
25. People with their flag to the fore (5).
26. Curses when nitrogen is put in a broken glass (6).
27. Donkey engine? (6).

DOWN

1. Restrains a great cricketer (6).
2. Kind of day that is up through being upset (9).
3. Thin wood is without honour in this place (7).
5. The party has little time for an actor (7).
6. Warmth in another man's arms (5).
7. Animal which would have to waste away if it lost its home (6).
8. Outstanding feats for great oarsmen? (13).
9. Food for two in bed? (4, 2, 7).
15. Rushing about madly, but with the slant becoming old-fashioned (9).
17. Moving round like a hand (7).
18. Panic as being wrecked in the sea (7).
19. Homer fluid in a collection of literature (6).
20. 'I am a tainted —— of the flock' *(M. of V.)* (6)
22. The flower of the orchestra (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1206



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NEW STATESMAN

Vol. 93 No. 2401

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Entertainments

POETRY & MUSIC at the Sugawn, Duke of Wellington, Balls Pond Rd, N1. Poems: George Barker, Angus Nicolson; Music: John Daws. Thurs. 31 March, 8.15 p.m. Adm. 60p.

'FILMS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH', A monthly programme of films made in Commonwealth countries will be screened during April-September by the Focus Group of the Royal Commonwealth Society and will be shown in the Commonwealth Hall at the RCS. Please apply for full details and prices of admission to the Public Affairs Dept, Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue, WC2. 930 6733.

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Concert

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NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. 'Tales from the Vienna Woods'; 'Blithe Spirit'; 'Julius Caesar'; 'Bedroom Farce'; 'Jumpers'; 'The Magic Drum'; 'Illuminatus'. See daily press for dates & times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

ROYAL COURT. 730 1745. Eves 8, Sats 5 & 8.30. 'Gimme Shelter' by Barrie Keefe.

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Exhibitions

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Meetings

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'MIDDLE EAST IMPASSE; The Only Way Out' — talk by Tony Klug. Sun. 27 March 8 p.m. Young Mapam, 37 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6. Adm. 50p.

RT HON. MRS SHIRLEY WILLIAMS MP, Minister of State for Education and Science, will speak at a joint discussion meeting of the Association of Commonwealth Teachers and the Focus Group of the Royal Commonwealth Society at 6.00 on Tuesday 29 March at the House of Commons. Current problems in London schools will be an important topic. Admittance will be by ticket only from the Public Affairs Dept of the Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue, WC2. 930 6733.

ISLINGTON FABIAN SOCIETY, Wed. 30 March 8 p.m. Albert Booth MP: 'Jobs for Londoners'. Town Hall, Upper St, N1. Tickets: 12 Highbury New Park, N5.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, 54 Holland Pk, W11. Sun. 27 March 'Questions and Answers' by Swami Bhavyananda at 5 p.m. All welc. Vedanta mag. 40p.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 26 March 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 29 March 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 30 March 6.30 p.m. Public Lecture 'Buddhist Path of Shinran' – Rev. Jack Austin. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

THEOSOPHY. Informal Forum on Basic Theosophy. Sun. 27 Mar. 8 p.m. S.a.e. for free pamphlet, book list, programme of talks. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2

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